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MOTHERS AND SONS

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OR

PROBLEMS

IN THE

HOME TRAINING OF BOYS

BY

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HEADMASTER OF HAILEYBURY COLLEGE

De même que la mère donne à son enfant sa première nourriture physique, de même elle est instituée de Dieu pour lui donner sa première nourriture spirituelle.—PESTALOZZI.

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TO MY WIFE

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

It has been pointed out to me that in these chapters the duties of fathers are almost wholly ignored. It is easy to answer that the Addresses were given to mothers, but yet I feel that the criticism is not quite without point. The book, though not bulky, certainly contains enough in the way of solid advice to suggest a very formidable set of responsibilities apparently to be undertaken by the mother alone. Indeed, it has been hinted that the prospect here opened out is alarming enough to deter any conscientious woman from matrimony altogether.

Lest my humble efforts should issue in a result so fraught with peril to the

next generation, I wish to say that there is hardly a single duty hinted at, in the performance of which a mother ought not to be helped by the father; and that wherever he is willing and able to bear his share of the burden "in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life," there is *every* reason to hope that the training will yield good fruit. *Where the two parents work together, failures are very rare.* But when people say that the mother's influence is all-important, surely they mean that as things are in this tempestuous century of ours, the father is for the most part away from home, and consequently that the work of training the children is either undertaken by the mother or by nobody.

There is nothing that England is more in need of than a clear recognition of home duties on the part of fathers in all ranks of society; but in the meantime

my readers will pardon me for having spoken to those who have shown themselves ready and eager to listen.

This edition contains, besides some verbal alterations, two paragraphs of additional matter,—the first beginning on page 96, the second at the end of Chap. V., and also Appendix II. For all these I am indebted to different correspondents.

E. L.

HAILEYBURY, 1893.

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

This book is an expansion of a lecture given at Cambridge, and again at Worcester, in 1891, and is published by request. Though much has been added, I have thought it advisable to keep as far as possible to the original form of an address.

It does not profess to be more than a fragmentary contribution to a vast subject. Some questions of importance I have omitted altogether, either because they have been adequately handled elsewhere, or because my own experience has not helped me to come to any very definite opinion about them.

E. L.

Haileybury, *November* 1892.

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INTRODUCTION

A FEW years ago the father of an idle public school-boy called upon the master who was in charge of the boy's tuition, to talk over his prospects and his uniformly bad "reports." In the course of the interview the father said, "Well, Mr. ——, I will just tell you what I've done, and I hope you will think I have acted rightly. During the holidays I settled that I would give the boy, before he came back to school, a good religious talk; a thing which of course I very seldom do. So I called him into my study and said, 'Now, Tommy, my boy, I don't often talk to you about religion

and that sort of thing, but before you go back to school I just want you to remember this. If you don't work at school —ahem—you will go to the wall.' Now don't you think I was right?"—"Perfectly right," said the schoolmaster with grave emphasis.

This incident illustrates the views of many men as to the real aim of a true and religious education. It is to prevent their boys from "going to the wall," to enable them to "get on"—in short, to make money. And the story is told early in this book, since it will serve to make clear for what kind of parent the following remarks are not intended. They are not intended for those who hold the widespread belief that methods of education are to be solely judged according as they tend to promote professional success in after life. I have, on the contrary, tried to keep in view the needs of that minority of English parents who still believe that

the importance of education consists in its effect on character, and who are desirous that the characters of their sons should be trained after the Christian model. And if any of the following hints appear likely to assist the training of a boy for a particular profession, or generally, for making money, this is so by accident, as I have not kept that object in view at all, but have tried to explain clearly, if possible, certain principles to be adopted and errors to be avoided in the guiding of the growth of a boy's character by his mother's influence. Possibly I have acted foolishly in thus narrowing the subject, and in partly ignoring some fashionable aspirations of the day. But among other reasons I would mention that, as the demand has long ago created the supply, you can easily get from the circulating libraries books full of hints as to the training up of boys to become

successful scholars, or lawyers, or doctors : there is also much printed matter likely to be of use in passing a boy through the Sandhurst examinations. I should hesitate to enter into competition with those who are the authorities on such subjects, but I gather that simple suggestions as to the vast and complex problem set before mothers, of training up boys through childhood and school life to true Christian manliness, are not to be got at very easily; that a great deal of bewilderment exists on the subject, and that since all knowledge worth having is born of pain, the experience of one who has suffered acutely from the mistakes of mothers may be of some little value.

Therefore I will ask any one who reads these lectures not to be disappointed if goodness is throughout assumed to be a better possession than cleverness, or even than bodily health. I freely admit that

there are two sides to the question, and beyond any doubt a large number of parents appear to take the opposite view. But feeling the uselessness of arguing on such a point, I must ask you to start with the assumption, that in a true education goodness is the end aimed at, while the intellect and the physical powers come in for their share of attention,—the former because character can certainly be moulded through it, the latter because we have no right to ill-treat our own bodies.

The following hints, then, are given with this one end in view. They will, moreover, be negative rather than positive, in that it is difficult to be positive about the value of any one *method* in education. The only thing about which one can be positive is that certain methods are wrong. That is to say, parents who have a genius for influencing their children, seem like other geniuses to be independent of

methods, and all that can be said about them is that they avoid certain blunders into which others fall. If there were one single practical rule of training which they all followed, we could perhaps say that there is one positive canon to be laid down and obeyed. But this does not appear to be the case. There are positive principles undoubtedly, and they need constant re-statement, but the successful educationalists apply them each in his own way. And even if the case were quite different, and there were ten or a dozen plain rules which could be adopted by every one, the mournful fact needs to be insisted on, that whereas A would carry them out with brilliant success, B would so work them as to bring about nothing but lamentation, mourning, and woe. The right methods, in short, if there are any, become baneful in the hands of the wrong person: and if this be thought to be a lame and impotent

conclusion to the whole matter, there is perhaps a little comfort to be gained from the counterbalancing certainty that some methods are wrong whoever uses them; and as many such methods are far from obsolete, there is still something to be hoped for from a treatise of this kind, provided it be, as I began by saying, rather negative than positive in tone.

It is, however, evident that the above-mentioned primary conditions of the problem are very imperfectly grasped. Nothing is commoner than for one parent to consult another as to what she would do in certain cases: if, for instance, her son were habitually rude to servants, or constantly late for morning prayers. Suppose the answer is somewhat as follows. "Well, I really don't know what I should do: my boys, I am thankful to say, have never been to blame in such matters. Don't you think you could talk to your boy and say so

and so?" Away goes the inquiring mother full of confidence, says the so and so in the very words, and is sorely disappointed at finding that nothing comes of it. But she has omitted to notice two things: first, that however excellent the advice be, everything depends on the way in which it is carried out; secondly, there is no guarantee that it is excellent. Her friend only gives it as relating to something outside of her experience.

The truth is that something in one parent, incommunicable to another, either enables her to surmount the difficulties, or prevents those difficulties from ever arising. And thus it becomes clear that that part of any system of training which is capable of being laid down in definite rules, is not so much the cause of success as the outward manifestation of something deeper and more inward which is not to be easily learnt, but which seems

to be the outcome of what is called strength of character in the parent.

Before we leave this point let me ask you to observe that this obscurity in which the education of children seems to be wrapped is not a proof that there is no science in the matter, but rather that we are dealing with subjects of such vital importance and depth, that they, for the present anyhow, are beyond science. The loftier the aim of education, the paler does the light of science become. Supposing we divide education under the following heads—physical, intellectual, moral, and religious. Here we have a series rising in importance and grandeur. Speaking roughly, we may say that the different sorts of education thus classified overlap each other, or are at least to some extent interdependent; but yet they mean processes with different aims in view. Now in the lowest class, physical education, science speaks boldly and surely: not so

surely as many mothers would wish, but still with enough certainty to enforce a very fair general obedience to her laws. Rise a little higher, and the subject becomes more obscure and the principles of training far less definite. We know less about the intellect than we do about the body; we know fairly well the penalties that follow on disobedience to the laws of diet; but we are far from clear as to the loss incurred through ignorance of the laws of intellectual development. And yet these latter are more accurately made out than the subtle laws of moral growth. To train a boy in unselfishness is vastly more difficult than to train his memory, and in my humble opinion vastly more important. And yet even this problem is simple compared with the task of bringing him to a constant and effectual sense of dependence on an unseen God. Therefore, do not suppose that the subject of these addresses, the

moral and religious training of boys, ought to be put on one side or left to chance because the rules belonging to it are not determined, since this fact is apparently a symptom of the greatness of the issues which are at stake; or, in other words, it indicates the necessity for proceeding cautiously, not for turning away from the subject altogether. And as already hinted, science goes quite far enough to show us that some methods are wrong; and with that much of certainty we can at any rate console ourselves for the dimness of the atmosphere through which the right path seems to lie.

CHAPTER I

A CAUSE OF FAILURE

The mother's influence should certainly be at its strongest during the early years of her son's life. And yet it not unfrequently is spoilt by the time he has reached the age of fourteen. It happens to me sometimes to be talking with a parent who has come down to the school to look after an unsatisfactory son. In all that she says of him I can see how anxious and thoughtful and truly good she is, and I wonder to myself what can be the reason that her control over him is so slight. Perhaps at this juncture he comes into the room, and in a moment

the mystery is solved. Almost before she has greeted him, she charges him with having inked his collar or smashed his hat, or she assumes he will be late for breakfast next morning. In short, to use the expressive monosyllable, she "nags" him. And if she does so till the poor lad begins to blush and look sheepish in the presence of a stranger, what must have been going on during all the years of childhood at home? Now the fact must be faced that little boys are often irritating people to live with. And it occasionally happens that the mother's equanimity is imperilled merely because of the persistency in little tricks which is often ingrained in healthy childhood. It is easy to talk of compelling your son to obedience, and always with serenity, but if he will drum on the table with his knuckles at the same moment of dinner every day, or make a noise just outside the nursery door

when the baby is having his midday sleep, something must be done, and speedily. It seems absurd to treat as moral offences what are well-known concomitants of growth, and yet the alternative of leaving them alone can hardly be recommended. Well, the first thing to be sure of is that if you "nag," you will lose your influence without curing the annoyance; the reason of this being that very often the boy is labouring to cure himself of the very thing for which you scold him. Especially is this true of the feckless boy. He may have much determination, but it will be years before he is quite rid of fecklessness; and meantime, how can you expect him to continue in his effort if you give him no credit for it? or what will he think of your insight if you fail to take note of his fitful resolutions? Your business is to set yourself to see the beginnings of good in him, and it is exceedingly probable that these very annoy-

ances are the outcome of a vigorous vitality, one of the most precious endowments any one can be blessed with in early life.

However irritating they may be, to "nag" about trifles is very foolish, because you want your powder and shot for other things. As to the general problem, the only recommendation that can be made is, first, to settle what you mean to stop; make it then a matter of obedience, and come down upon the violation of your order sharply and promptly. The worst "naggers" are those who make offences out of things perfectly innocent to the child, simply because they exasperate the elders. No rebuke should be administered (unless the thoughtlessness is positively culpable) except when there has been disobedience. But "nagging" is worse than foolish. It is the indication of a failure of love, and if the mother's love ever fails, whence is the boy to learn the idea

of the love of God? That is why an opinion I have heard maintained that it is good for the mother of growing boys to have "a bit of a temper," is so dangerously false. She may have as much as she likes if it is never displayed; the effort of self-control will give her the kind of strength that is required. But any display of temper, no matter how keen the exasperation has been, is a weakening of the bond, and the immediate conquest will be paid for hereafter, with compound interest. Again, it is an indication of littleness of mind, and a narrow horizon. Is it not perfectly certain that little boys—indeed big ones too—may be nothing short of nuisances in the house and outside of it, and yet be growing into fine men? I have heard of a mother who never rebuked or checked her numerous sons in all their oddities from the nursery onwards, but let them freely mix with grown-up people, and

display the most amazing behaviour. What happened? They have grown up to be part of the salt of the earth, and to combine, to an uncommon degree, goodness and popularity. I do not ask you to follow this lady's example, for many people's nerves would be found unequal to the task. But do remember that you are training your small son to be a man. Before you revile him, think of what you want him to be twenty or thirty years hence. Or better still, try not to forget that it is for eternal life that you profess to be bringing him up, and ask yourself, in view of what is coming, if these little annoyances ought to upset the balance of your mind. A mother who often ponders on eternity will never "nag."

CHAPTER II

RELIGION

It is customary for those educationalists who offer suggestions on this inconceivably difficult question to treat of such matters as the teaching of private prayer, Bible stories, Sunday observance, and so forth. I should not find it hard to formulate a dozen precepts on these subjects which might suit some children fairly well. But is it not abundantly clear that all this is on the surface, and a mere dallying with the real question? What we want to know is when and how can the religious instinct, the sense of

dependence on an unseen God, be said to grow?

Now it is passing strange that this question, which goes to the root of the matter, should be often left undecided, and even undiscussed, by English and German writers on education. But whatever the cause is, we find as a matter of fact that the whole subject is wrapped up in almost impenetrable darkness; that kind of darkness which allows one writer to assume that the religious instinct in boys is wholly dormant; another, that it is exceedingly active; while those most interested in such problems seem to be hardly aware that there is a contradiction. Let me place before you two extracts to make my meaning clear.

"In the matter of religion I believe boys are unlike girls. A girl's conduct is influenced by her religious convictions and emotions. Not so a boy. Although his religious conviction may be deep and

growing, it grows side by side with very grave faults. . . . It seems to be a law of a boy's being that his religious life must be left in obscurity. We must not attempt to sound its depths or draw it forth by emotions. A girl's emotions lie near the surface; they are easily called out, and as easily calmed. But if the depths of a boy's religious life are stirred into emotion, it is a great risk, and we may do incalculable harm."[1]

Now contrast with this point of view the following account of a great religious educator. "Ce n'étaient là pourtant que les moyens ordinaires de l'éducation chrétienne. Si puissants qu'ils fussent et si admirables leurs résultats, il n'en croyait pas nécessaire de recourir, en de certains moments déterminés, à ces ressources extraordinaires qui se nomment les retraites. 'Il ne faut pas s'imaginer, en effet,' disait-

[1] *Stray Papers on Education*, by B. H., pp. 30, 31, 2nd edition.

il, 'que des enfants de douze à quinze et vingt ans n'aient pas leurs misères morales, n'aient pas à lutter quelquefois prodigieusement pour se conserver bons et purs, et que les secours ordinaires d'une bonne maison d'éducation, si nombreux qu'ils soient, suffisent pour les protéger toujours, et dispensent de recourir à ce grand et exceptionnel moyen de conversion et de sanctification qui se nomme une retraite.' Il jetait donc à de certaines époques, avec une haute intelligence encore des besoins religieux des enfants, et de l'effet à produire sur eux par ces retraites, à travers le train accoutumé de leur vie, cette forte et puissante secousse religieuse afin de frapper un grand coup sur leurs âmes, briser enfin leurs funestes habitudes, les arracher violemment au mal, et les remettre énergiquement dans le bien."[1]

It may be said that the first writer is

[1] *Vie de Mgr. Dupanloup*, Lagrange, vol. i. p. 171, 6th edition. Paris.

speaking of English, the second of French boys. But that explains nothing, unless we assume that the English are naturally far less religious than the French—a very questionable proposition indeed. Again, to take the evidence of practical English teachers, we find the majority of sermons preached to schoolboys deal enormously more in moral exhortation than in religious appeal. It is widely if tacitly felt that the motives which touch them are those of rectitude and conscience, not those which assume the sense of the Unseen Presence. On the other hand, a minority would be found who would adopt a totally contrary method. Some few parents bring their children, quite young, into church, to be present, without communicating, at the Eucharist, in order that their incipient sense of God's presence may be fostered. Canon Knox Little recommends this in his book on the Christian home. And in some parishes it is systematically

done by the clergy. Again, while some parents speak of their little children's vivid realisation of spiritual facts, an eminent psychologist speaks as if this realisation only began dimly and feebly about fifteen or sixteen years of age. Now, without expressing any opinion on these practices and theories, or on the beliefs that underlie them, I wish to draw your attention to the astonishing bewilderment and perplexity which are here betrayed. However true it be that many people doubt the existence of deep religious feeling in any one, yet there remains a large number of parents who agree in assuming some sense of Divine things in children. Is it not then remarkable that in respect of this religious sense and its growth, which all of these would acknowledge to be a question of the utmost importance, no attempt at a definite agreement should have been, as far as we know, ever made? If the question is not of

importance, then the religious observances in education are useless; but so long as they exist we have a right to ask what is the assumption that is made about the boys' intelligence in these matters.

Perhaps the truth is that every one judges first from his own history, and secondly from that of any children he may know well. And each man's history is peculiar, and the children he may know probably differ from each other. Nor must you expect me as a schoolmaster to be able to give any light. You see the question is not what boys are at sixteen,—I should myself say they were mostly irreligious at that age, — but whether the instinct which seems to exist in early childhood might not be kept alive by proper treatment till sixteen, and on through life. Schoolmasters know pretty well that it is not so kept alive, but as to the potentialities of

childhood in this respect we are—or ought to be—in the attitude of learners. Moreover, the differences between boys who grow up to be eminent examples of virtue and deeply religious men are wide enough to warn us against any generalisations. At the age when Cardinal Newman was writing sermonettes, John Lawrence was getting into row upon row at Haileybury, and we have all read of saints who betrayed a purely mundane spirit in their teens, though the strength of character could generally be detected, and was in some cases conspicuous.

Such puzzling facts as these have given rise to the idea that as true holiness is the work of the Holy Spirit, and cannot be foreseen or produced by man, so the aim of an educationalist should naturally be to foster a sound moral tone through boyhood, and to trust to the supernatural influences operating later on the well-

prepared soil. But this is an abandonment of the particular problem under discussion, viz. the when and how of the growth of the religious instinct. It virtually assumes the late growth of this instinct, and we are far too ignorant at present to be justified in making any such assumption. Nor is it at all true to say that whatever be the assumption, the practice will not vary. It does vary very considerably, according as parents mean to aim merely at good conduct through a certain minimum of religious observance, or, on the other hand, strive to maintain in the child a constant sense of an Unseen Presence. The difference in the practice, to say nothing of the spirit of the two sorts of training, will be very clearly marked; and I venture to think there are tolerably visible differences in the results.

This being so, can anything definitely be affirmed? A great deal can be

affirmed definitely enough, but not of a nature to command reasonable attention, unless it be by one who has devoted a close and peculiar study to the psychology of children between three and ten years of age. For some mysterious reason the utterances of the professed psychologists on this point are fragmentary and unsatisfying. In J. Sully's massive volume on the "outlines" (!) of this science, out of nearly 700 pages less than one is devoted to the religious sentiment. The only remark concerning our question to be found in that page is to the effect that "religious feeling takes its rise in close connection with moral discipline." The author in a note cites two learned Germans, Volkmann and Wundt, and adds, "The former views the emotion as distinct from the moral in its origin and early development: the latter finds its source in the moral feelings." There

seems, in short, to exist among educationalists a sort of nervous hesitation about touching on the subject, owing to a misgiving that the average parent would resent their words as idle or impertinent, and would probably prefer a treatise on training the memory or the digestion: and if this is their view of what parents expect from them, I hesitate to say they are mistaken. At the same time there is quite a sufficient demand for clear thought on the subject to make one regret that some fragments of analysis have not been spared for it from the dissertations on perception or constructive imagination.

Where such authorities, then, have apparently feared to tread, let us walk warily. I would say nothing on this subject dogmatically, but it appears that of the different opinions propounded, that which asserts that the religious instinct begins very early in childhood, is,

on the whole, the most likely to be true. The few educationalists who have acted on this assumption are very positive that they have not laboured in vain: whereas those who have proceeded on the opposite assumption, that the instinct is dormant till sixteen or later, have of course no evidence to produce against them. The instinct may have been there, but as it was never appealed to, it was not manifested.

Much the most serious objection to this theory is that there is no way of distinguishing the child's readiness to acknowledge God's presence from his love of peopling visible spaces and objects with creations of his fancy; further, that the admitted deadness of most children of eight or ten to similar spiritual facts is probably part of the decay of these strange fancies which are slowly destroyed by the growth of the judgment and power of perception.

This, perhaps, may be met by a practical answer. One of the most powerful solvents of a child's early superstitions must be the growing conviction that none of his elders share them. Now, granting that his readiness to receive spiritual teaching may be largely due to absence of judgment and the over-receptivity of his mind, yet is it not certain that as time goes on it need not die away as his own native fancies do, unless it is exposed to the same dissolving influences? If, in short, he sees that his mother has no living belief in the unseen,—if nothing that she says or does in his presence recalls those truths of which he has been told,—then surely his belief in God will share the fate of his belief in fairies; and if, on the other hand, the mother's look, words, and actions, as well as his other surroundings, remind him of those truths, can any one say that his belief in them would

not have a good chance of surviving? It has come to him accredited with all possible authority, and by that same authority is maintained, whereas he soon finds that his little foolish fancies are his own creation, and are unsupported by anything his parent says or does.

Now the results in boyhood, I should say, tally to a considerable extent with this hypothesis. It is true that a good and careful home training, even if it be largely blended with spiritual influences, will sometimes turn out a boy who, at sixteen, is apparently irreligious. But then between the home and that age six or seven years of school life have intervened; and, as things are now, no matter what care may be taken by the masters, the influence of the other boys is quite strong enough to drive the religious feelings—not away—but, for a while at any rate, under the surface. This is not meant as an indictment

against schools, but simply as another way of saying that at an extremely shy and sensitive age, when young boys copy in their demeanour not the highest, but the most powerful and prevailing fashion, it is inconceivable that in English schools the expression of the religious instinct should be anything but rare. I have known some thoroughly religious schoolmasters affirm that this reserve, so far from being regrettable, is a sign of healthy moral and spiritual growth in boyhood, even in cases where there has previously been a thorough spiritual leavening of the child's life. During the dark period of growth, from fourteen to eighteen, there must be, and there practically always is, reticence. Possibly the state of things with French boys is different, but you and I have quite enough to do to investigate the young of one nation at a time.

But though driven for a time under the

surface, the religious feeling certainly does not die. The cases of its reappearance in early manhood, and subsequent development, are too common and too plainly the outcome of the home influences to allow of any such supposition. Indeed, it could, I think, be shown that some few boys have taken pains to conceal their deepest feelings during school life, while at home there has not been any temporary access of reserve between son and mother. On the theory, then, that the instinct can be fostered in childhood, let us consider some few leading principles.

Beyond any question, of all human influences the spiritual conviction of the mother must be the strongest. It would be absurd to say that it is stronger than all others put together, because it is not; but it is stronger than any other taken singly. My impression is that its force is often weakened by shyness. If a

mother is really living in communion with God, a little less formality in talking with her children, a little less of confining her influence to stated hours of prayer or lesson, would tend to produce a naturalness in religion, which is an exceedingly beautiful thing, and not at all alien to children. Remember how strangely strong is the probability that your son will grow up to restrict his religion to Sundays, and therefore do your utmost for the first nine years of his life at least to spread it over each week and every day. Take all pains to make him observe Sunday as he ought, but be on your guard against the hebdomadal piety of the Saxon. It is too congenial to us all to need any training from you. And yet it is a very tremendous thought that your endeavours must be the outcome of your character. It is not much use putting on religion for the child's benefit: according as it has been

in you all along, so will it influence him. So important is this truth that it seems to render any further remarks useless. Still, though we all must often bewail our lost opportunities, and feel that little is left but to gather up the fragments, there are precautions in practice to be observed.

Whenever a mother is going to give a religious lesson to a child, she should prepare herself for it as for a singularly sacred and momentous task. Her manner even more than her words will stamp the child's mind for life with a certain idea of God, and will therefore for ever affect his power of thinking aright on holy things. People talk about boyhood and youth being open to all sorts of impressions, but who will dare to say that the later ones can be compared in permanence to these the earliest of all? Consider the nature of a child's acquisitive powers; with what speed and unerring certainty he

gathers for life new impressions, and stores up new images every day; how watchful is his eagerness, how perfect his concentration, as he listens to your first unfolding of the Gospel story! You know that in other subjects the knowledge he is now gaining never dies, but is added to daily and hourly, till it becomes a power able to fashion the whole of his life; is not this true also of his early lessons in religion? Therefore it depends on you to plant that knowledge, and to foster it till it lives with a vigorous life of its own. But if, after planting it, you neglect it till it die, it is unsafe to reckon on any one else being able in later years to plant the seed afresh.

Let me leave the boys for a moment and say just one word about girls. If you feel in any degree the greatness and sacredness of the task committed to you, and grieve that its due perform-

ance is beyond your powers, at least strive to get your daughters to prepare themselves for being mothers. Consider the lives that scores of girls are now leading in England, the books they read, the talk they indulge in, the men they are allowed to know. No doubt their mothers mean all this to be a definite preparation for something in the future, though what that something is I am too dull to guess; but it is in no sense a preparation for the task of planting the first religious impressions in a child.

Although we are at present dealing with early boyhood, we ought to project our thoughts forward to the danger of infidelity in manhood. It is not improbable that your son will have to face this peril some day, and will be assailed with the plausible statement that if he obeys the dictates of reason he will be obliged to reject a large portion of the

Christian faith. Now I do not know if any of you have ever seriously and patiently discussed theological questions with some one who differs from you on fundamental doctrines. If you have done so, you must have discovered that reasoning which is as clear and convincing to you as any reasoning possibly can be, produces not the very slightest effect on your interlocutor's opinion, and it becomes certain that there must be a difference in the very starting-point of everything, in your respective ideas of God. What possibility is there of two reasoners reaching the same conclusion if they start from different, though unexpressed, premisses? If two men have quite different conceptions of the enormity of sin, the infinity of God's love, the corruption of human nature, there is no use whatever in their expecting to agree in their views of the Atonement, of eternal punishment,

of miracles, and of many other questions. This seems to me a truism. Whence, then, have men derived their ideas on those fundamental subjects?—From their mothers. And if the early teaching has been sound and sympathetic, the boy may grow up to have some doubts, and will very likely feel sorely bewildered when he first meets some glib-tongued rationalist, but the main fortress of his faith will be impregnable. He could no more doubt the Personality and Presence of God than he could the existence of the sun in the sky.

It may very likely, however, be on the lips of some of you that you are all doing your best, but that the religious teaching in schools, especially public schools, is so jejune and poor, that your endeavours are seriously thwarted. Periodically the newspapers are full of asseverations of this kind. I am not going to say if I agree with them or

not. That is not the question now. If your influence in childhood is so strong that it can survive the assaults of rationalism in manhood, certain it is that it will carry the boy's religious life safe through the withering atmosphere (if such it be) of his public school.

Connected with the religious training of childhood many practical questions spring up, such as the teaching of prayer, Bible-reading, and Sunday observance. My experience of children has been far too slight to enable me to speak at all clearly on such subjects, and again I feel that the grasp of the main fact—the all-importance of the idea of God planted by the earliest lessons—will probably solve the practical problems satisfactorily, though very diversely in different homes. As to prayer, this only will I say, that it is quite impossible to be too careful about reverence. Of course there is the danger of a shock

when the child is brought face to face with the irreverence of others. But this may be anticipated by a warning. Further, if a child's prayer is to be natural, it must express his own hopes and fears, not those of grown-up people.

The teaching of the Bible stories ought not in these days to present any very great difficulty. If a child shows irreverence in speaking of what he has been told, it must be best to try and get him gradually to adopt a right tone, rather than to rebuke him; and yet this will be necessary at times. Consult on all these points the wisest and holiest women of your acquaintance. Previous to, or combined with, the Bible lessons will come the first statement of the existence of God, and of the kingdom of evil and the creation of man. I would suggest that the mother should present the truths as portions of a partial revela-

tion, so that when the first impossible question is launched at her—and that will take place early—there may be no great shock to the child when the answer comes that "Mother doesn't know." Sometimes the bewilderment of early manhood is caused by the discovery that there are things of which the Church owns herself ignorant, and to guard against this it is well to show a child that we may stray too far in speculation. He may be thereby discouraged from hereafter expending his strength and confusing his brain over obviously insoluble problems—a desperately common form of wasting time. The object of the teaching should be first to show the limits of revelation, and to instil concerning all that lies beyond them a spirit of trustful patience; secondly, to show that within those limits we accept what is given, and apply it honestly in our lives. I urge this principle in con-

nection with the early lessons, as it may easily be put into force at once. Where it is ignored, a young man enters on life with a vague idea that orthodoxy claims to know everything, but is careful to practise only what is convenient. But I would add, that the plea of ignorance should refer only to questions outside human ken, not to those which can be cleared up by consulting a commentary.

Sunday observance should be the natural outcome of the religious training. Let me remind you that the first idea of the Christian Sunday was worship, the later idea rest. Ideally it would be a day joyfully and thankfully set apart for the higher life of the soul, and free, therefore, from restrictions. The object, then, to aim at is to make the necessary restrictions full of meaning, and not grievous to be borne. Hence if toys are forbidden for the whole of Sunday the day will be

disliked or the restrictions evaded, especially as play is known by all to be innocent at other times.[1] I would suggest that in early years before church-going begins, there should be cessation from toys and other week-day diversions just during the time when the parents are in church, and that something as like a devotional talk as circumstances will permit be held instead, so that the children may feel themselves to be doing something to keep the day, and may regard this as a privilege. Similarly, could not the needlework or netting (a very good home pursuit for boys) allowed on Sunday be utilised solely for charitable purposes? Again, as to reading, some pressure may surely be employed to ensure that anyhow for part of Sun-

[1] It happened once that a precocious young draughtsman of six summers was rebuked by his nurse for using his pencil on Sunday. His answer was unexpected, "All right, nurse; it's only a house near Jerusalem." Mercifully the good woman, though baffled, had wit enough to report this rejoinder downstairs.

day it shall be connected with sacred subjects. Great care is necessary in the selection of the books or stories. The judicious mixtures of pious homily with an exciting story, with which we are all familiar, fail chiefly because children skip whatever bores them. In all these regulations one should keep in view the necessity, not of checking enjoyment, but of diverting it, as far as may be, into less terrestrial channels. Indeed, the day should be marked by the whole household as a day of gladness.

Another difficult question is that of churchgoing. In early years children enjoy accompanying their elders to church. Let the privilege, therefore, be restricted so as not to become cheap. Later on, the difficulty is all of the opposite kind. It is almost certain to be a serious one, but I believe the best hope of meeting it lies in implanting the idea that we go to church

primarily to *give* God something in praise, not only to get something by petition. This is in exact accord with the early liturgical instinct of the Catholic Church, and is surely based on a true view of the Almighty.[1] As early as possible get the boys to understand something of the history of our forms of prayer, and keep on reminding them judiciously of what you have told them. How can you expect a fidgety boy of twelve to get much good from a service, unless he knows why he is there, why certain prayers are used; and lastly, unless he feels that to subdue the inclination to incessant movement is part of his offering? I trust you will not fall into the

[1] Cf. Browning, *Ferishtah's Fancies*, p. 42—

"Our human flower, sun-ripened, proffers scent,
Though reason prove the sun lacks nose to feed
On what himself made grateful: flower and man,
Let each assume that scent and love alike
Being once born must needs have use! Man's part
Is plain—to send love forth—astray perhaps:
No matter, he has done his part."

error of supposing that by diminishing the obligation of praise and prayer you will guard a boy against the modern fashion of avoiding church services. If you accustom him to only one service on Sunday, how many will he attend when he grows up? Teaching is what he requires. If you were to ask the *jeunesse dorée*, who find church-going a bore, a question as to the meaning of daily service, or the date of the Prayer-book, their answers would explain why they lounge in a club on Sunday mornings. Something would be gained if boys were taught to regard sermons as not the most important part of the service. Strangely enough, people insist that if sermons were more attractive, young men would go to church in flocks. Perhaps they would, but what then? They would tolerate the worship and the supplications offered by others, in order to enjoy an eloquent

or a pungent discourse, seasoned to suit their dainty palates. And no one is so fastidious about a sermon as a young gentleman who cannot abide being bored. Simple truths well-expressed and well-applied, careful instruction on the Bible narrative, plain teaching on doctrines of which he stands in sore need,—all this is dull to the poor fellow. He must have a racy discourse or he stays away. And if you train him to think that this is the meaning of church-going, it were better that he should. Please tell him that he may turn to profit the worst of sermons by thinking over it afterwards, and that if he fails to do this, the most splendid efforts of eloquence will be expended upon him in vain. I say this, not to excuse men who preach bad sermons, but to explain the fruitlessness of many good ones.

Perhaps you will say that these are things which should be taught at school

Well, I trust they will be. But let us take this opportunity of seeing what is really meant by leaving such subjects to the schools.

Tommy and Jack leave home and begin their scholastic career in Latin, History, Mathematics, a little Science, and the Bible. For a period of twelve weeks or so they lead a life full of happiness and healthy occupation, but strangely interrupted by certain lengthy and irksome formalities, which necessitate their sitting still and listening to an adult talking on topics removed by an almost infinite distance from their natural life and its surroundings; a medley of information about forms of speech which have not been heard since the Saxons came to England, about towns which perished 2000 years ago, as well as odd facts about the Danish Steelyard and coral islands in the Pacific. Once, or perhaps twice, a week, taught

by the same man and in the same tone of voice, come stories from the Old Testament, and comments on a few verses in St. Matthew's Gospel. Now Tommy and Jack are sons of parents who have a lofty idea of the responsibility of schoolmasters, and who have generously abstained, like many of their neighbours, from interfering in the school teaching by premature instruction in any of these subjects. It has seemed to them best to leave the master a fair field and a virgin soil on which to sow the seed. It is, then, with a sense of novelty akin to bewilderment that the two boys begin their studies at school; but being active little fellows they give their energies to whatever is set before them, strange farrago though it be. Moreover, they learn that for some wholly inscrutable reason, unless they imbibe some of the information so as to reproduce it after a few weeks

on paper, they get "dropped on to," that is, "jawed" at school, and forbidden apple tart at home. So they "work"; they struggle to retain the farrago for the required time, and soon discover that if they subsequently forget all about it nobody seems to mind.

Now the prominent fact in all this is the startling discontinuity between the school and the home. As soon as the holidays begin, the farrago talk ceases to disturb the natural course of things, and the boys find that, except for a passing and rather contemptuous allusion now and then from their father or elder brother, it has been obliterated from their day's experience as completely as if it had been some strange dream. The process of forgetting is rapid and victorious. It is, however, accelerated by the fact that there are two dominant interests which belong both to school and home, and are allowed an unin-

terrupted influence throughout the year; these are athletics and food. It is not wonderful, therefore, that they live and grow with a vigorous vitality, while at the end of each term the claims of learning abruptly cease. Whatever interest the boys may have felt in their daily task dies away; and work is resumed after the holidays, much as some dead heavy pack is shouldered by a beast of burden, to be carried a little way along a dusty road which has no turning and no apparent end.

This picture of modern education may be considered somewhat sombre. Let me say again that I am simply depicting the probable results of the plan adopted by a large and increasing number of parents in all classes of society, that of leaving the training of their children entirely to the schools. There are, of course, exceptions, but they are not under discussion now.

A fact, however, has to be noticed

which might seem to tell against the truth of this account. During the last twenty years there has been manifested a remarkable increase of industry among the boys of the upper classes. Their parents tell them to "work," and they do so. But this has not materially affected their view of the subjects. They pound away at them at first in their search after a quiet life—a quest in which most boys are constantly engaged—but later on because they see that examinations have to be passed or scholarships gained, if life is to be lived at all. But as the books they read and the knowledge they acquire are never mentioned at home except in joke, the mystery as to why these subjects are chosen to be inflicted on them at school is never thoroughly dispelled.

"Of course this is all the fault of the teachers." No doubt. But supposing our two young friends are exceptionally

fortunate, and are stimulated by some gifted master till they grow to like their studies almost as well as their football and their food, this, you will observe, is not because of the holidays, but in spite of them. The boys will be conscious of no debt to the parental encouragement: their zest in intellectual work has been quickened elsewhere: and so they come to transfer part of their affections and their allegiance away from home to the outer world. So that here, too, there is a loss. An intellectual young man who has learnt to despise his home is a sad subject for study; and from this class, men of priggish and ambitious tempers are largely recruited.

Now, without for the present touching on questions of intellectual training at home, I wish to bring to your notice the fact that among the subjects thus presented to the boys is religious instruction. I am not speaking to parents who honestly

try to impart this instruction, but to those who do not, and who expect the schools to supply the want. And their name I grieve to say is legion.

You are leaving this unspeakably precious opportunity to a stranger instead of taking it yourselves. You are trusting that the outlines of God's revelation can be imparted to your child by the man who teaches him Euclid. Have you ever thought that there is a risk that the master may know more of Euclid than he does of these outlines, and may also give more time to it during the week? Such things have been known in schools. You think that as the boy is made to remember the one, so he may the other. But to what purpose does he remember his Euclid? You may never have seen, as I have, an undergraduate, just through his Previous Examination at Cambridge, hurl the works of that venerable writer

violently out of window, or have heard the deep intensity of his resolve never to turn over a page of the book again. It is true he had remembered him up to nineteen years of age; but that was because the avenues of life would otherwise have been closed to him. Euclid meant money, the Bible did not. If it had, perhaps he would have retained some of it in his head till nineteen, and then despatched it after the Euclid. In any case, by the time he was thirty, he probably knew as little of one as of the other. You wish, I suppose, that the religious instruction which your son receives shall mould his disposition, purify his thoughts, quicken his finer aspirations, lift his whole being a little above earth. If so, you are not going the right way to work. Mothers, what you teach your children they receive as part of their real life; what you leave to us to teach they are apt to look on first as a strange excres-

cence on life, then as a means of making money; to make them view it in any other light costs a herculean effort, and not every schoolmaster is a Hercules. Please do not trust to impossibilities. If it were a question of Roman History or Greek Grammar, you could not perhaps do much, though these, like many other subjects, might well be started by the parents, so as to be pursued at school under a sense of home sanction. But it is the absolutely necessary teaching about God and His Church and His Word that is at stake, and there, where it is perfectly possible, it is your plain duty to lay securely the first foundations.

There is nothing in this suggestion that need alarm any one. I am not asking you to embark on a long course of controversial theology, but only to lay the foundations of Church history, knowledge of Church worship, of the Creeds, of the Catechism, before he goes

to school, and, if possible, to build upon them afterwards. May I ask you also to observe that whatever view you may adopt as to the mysterious growth of the religious instinct in boyhood, there is nothing to be said against sound religious *instruction* carefully and lovingly given. Indeed it is far easier to maintain interest in consecutive and progressive teaching about a big subject, than in incessant moral exhortation, or in the Sunday stories about good little urchins exposed to temptation. It is impossible to say exactly how moral principle is instilled, but I distrust such narratives if they are allowed to take the place of serious instruction.

What is wanted is that boys should early be introduced to the great dogmas about the being and attributes of God contained in the Creeds; that they should know why Creeds were ever drawn up, and at what time a Church in England

was first heard of, what sort of worship was carried on, whence it came, and how long it has lasted. Further, they would be interested in learning the reasons in outline of the growth of the Roman power, and the protests made in England against its encroachments; the meaning of Baptism, Confirmation, and Ordination, and the difference between Church and Dissent. On this last point, whatever view may be taken, the facts should be clearly put, and nothing said in an uncharitable spirit. And facts should also be pointed out to show that our Church dates from before Henry VIII., since error on that subject is exceedingly difficult to expel from older heads. Be concrete; be consecutive; make your history alive by visits to the village church, or to the nearest cathedral.

I should not be surprised if you found your own knowledge increased by conscientious efforts in this direction. It

may be that sometimes you would wish that you knew more. If this be so, please remember that not all clergymen are ignorant, and that some who live perhaps not very far off would be most willing to help you, if only you would do what to many seekers after truth seems strangely difficult—that is, ask a few simple questions.

CHAPTER III

ALTRUISM

This formidable word we will roughly define as consideration for others, and the problem before you is how to awaken this feeling in your boy sooner than it commonly makes its existence felt; and having wakened it, to foster its growth.

There are sundry generalisations often uttered about boys being totally indifferent to the feelings of others. Many seem to be, and a very large number, from want of knowledge, behave as if they were. But there are instances we could all produce of striking thoughtfulness for others in boys about fifteen years

old—a very beautiful symptom of an unselfish disposition, or of good training. And even putting these on one side, can we feel sure that the difference between boys' selfishness and men's is more than skin-deep? Compare the behaviour of young and old when, for instance, an alarm of fire is raised in a theatre, or when four travellers in a railway compartment at midnight see a bagman on the doorstep meditating an entrance. Consider whether there is much difference in the proportion of the expenditure on self-indulgence and on charity among men and boys, and whether at an evening party these are much more willing than those to talk to deaf old ladies of limited mental horizon; and I think you will agree that not only is the boy father of the man, but that the lineage is singularly easy to trace.

It is clear enough, however, that altruism is for a time latent in many boys, and

makes its appearance at different ages and in varying degrees in different individuals. This is true of all qualities of mind and character, and as all the others can be evoked or suppressed by training, there is no reason why this one may not largely depend for its vigour on the mother's influence.

It is of great importance to get a child to see that thought for others is a pleasure; and this cannot be done by any but the gentlest means. Unselfishness must be seen in another, and its happiness manifested, and then the young egoist will take to it exactly as he would to learning the rudiments of any new knowledge. And I should say that if discovered in an unexpected quarter among his own equals, it affects a child more powerfully than any display of it which his mother could make, since from her it is for a long time, I fear, taken as a matter of course, much

like the coming round of the mid-day meal. Perhaps a brief but painful reminiscence might not be out of place in this connection. At the age of eleven, in company with several other greedy little boys, one was sitting at a table watching the approach of a plate being handed down, on which was a limited number of pieces of buttered toast. Each boy as it came to him took one, and vigilance enabled our hero to detect that he would either get the last or none at all. As the plate came between him and the boy opposite, a rapid grab on his part secured the prize, but the triumph was completely spoilt by his observing a gesture showing that his friend was in the act of offering it to him at the moment it was rudely seized. The feeling of shame within him has lived to this hour.

Among that rapacious gang this solitary evidence of unselfishness was a

revelation of an unknown and better world; and I say with deep conviction that the absence of such a revelation in the early life of many boys is the cause of an incalculable amount of evil in after years. Goodness must be seen to be imitated by the young. I have met many a score of selfish little boys, but I doubt if one of them would not have been permanently better if vivid object lessons in unselfishness could have been brought plainly before his eyes.

It seems, then, that the training in altruism should begin through brothers and sisters. If there are none, strangers or cousins should be imported to supply their place. A great deal ought to be made of the very strong social instincts of children.

The fostering of this quality is a task of the utmost importance, and is therefore difficult. Incessant vigilance is neces-

sary. When a mother sees the children at play together, and observes one —probably a boy—accustoming himself to secure the attentions of the others, and always thinking of himself first, her business is to wake up within him an instinct which ought to be active, but is dormant. Suppose that that boy, at the age of two, had shown no wish to learn how to walk, it is certain that the mother would have spared no pains to rouse up the desire in him. She would have consulted the doctor and worried all her nearest of kin. But when he grows and grows, and the years pass, and he betrays no beginning of a feeling for the wants of others, no gladness in their joys, or wish to share their sorrows, nobody cares. It seems to be thought that as he is naturally defective, so nature may be blamed for it, and nothing need be done.[1]

[1] Cf. an excellent paper in Vol. II. of the *Parents' Review* (p. 330), called "Family Bickerings."

We have much yet to learn. If we are in earnest, anxiety and love will find out the way. Stories will be told to the child emphasising the joy of renunciation. No opportunity will be lost for giving special praise at the very faintest indication of unselfishness. As soon as the boy is old enough, take him into consultation over cases of distress, though his suggestions will be poor and useless. At prayer-time in the evening take care to review the events of the day, and see if some incipient self-denial has found a place. A day without it will be felt to be incomplete.

In the same way cruelty to animals will be prevented by simple teaching of fact. A diminutive infant will maul the housefly from a wish to possess and investigate, and from failure to understand that the insect is alive. Little boys sin from ignorance. Enlighten them, therefore, as to the animal's sensitiveness by

a sharp infliction of (if possible) similar pain to that which they have been giving. Inflict it without a trace of anger, merely as a means of instruction. And encourage meantime the keeping of pets, and even of toads, after the manner of Kingsley's children, and the voluntary tending of something like a lame dog or a chicken with a broken wing.

Lastly, let the small renunciations that are made take *visible* effect. The giving up of money should be thus rewarded. Delicacies should be spared, or a comfortable chair relinquished, not for the benefit of a remote hospital or of a mission in the other hemisphere, but for use in a convalescent home close by, or for the enjoyment of some indigent cottager whom the young almsgiver can personally visit, so that he may be certain that his diminutive self-denial is doing something. The nightmare of misdirected charity need not haunt

him for the present. And only very gently, far on in his teens, should he be warned of the apparent fruitlessness of much voluntary renunciation. Keep these things from him for a time till he can bear them. But as his imagination and his knowledge of geography grow, so his doles may be distributed farther afield; and let him, as soon as he is ready, have a voice in his mother's deliberations as to what claims upon her kindness she must heed, in the hope that he will be trained in all ways to be a cheerful, constant, and orderly distributor of this world's goods.

CHAPTER IV

FOOD

The subject of this section is one on which you may suppose that, as all you need can be gathered from doctors and hygienic manuals, you could dispense with any remarks of mine. Moreover, it is in this department of education that the public, especially the mothers, can claim to have exercised a powerful and salutary pressure on boarding-schools, to which these latter have visibly yielded, and by degrees have taken steps, some reluctantly, some angrily, to mend the very defective commissariat departments of thirty years ago. Am I, then, so pre-

sumptuous as to offer instruction on this momentous practical problem, in which I ought to be nothing but a humble learner from you?

Certainly not. At present I will only venture to say on the subject of school feeding that, with all the good will in the world, even small changes in the food supply of a large number are not made without increase of work, expense, and grumbling in the underworld. Next, that the least trustworthy documents in all literature are the letters in which schoolboys comment to their parents on the school feeding. Thirdly, that no respectable bursar resents a hint even if it be perfectly impossible to carry out. Fourthly, that pendulums have a way of swinging, and if starvation was a danger to boys thirty years ago, it is luxury with which their sons are threatened in the year of grace 1893.

No, it is not so much to offer you

counsel, as to invite your co-operation, that I proceed to the subject of food. If you want to know how your sons are fed at school, let your inspection of the premises include the "grub-shop."

This edifice may be of mean exterior and insignificant proportions, but its effect on the life of the school is enormous. I am not speaking of this school or of that, but as far as I know of all, when I say that the amount of money spent by boys on unnecessary dainties is simply appalling. All due allowance should be made for the fact (to which I believe doctors testify) that during the time of growth the desire for sweet food is natural. Nor is it fair to say that all the expenditure goes in what may be accurately described as "grub." Some is devoted to harmlessly enriching the school breakfast or tea. But the plain fact is that while there has been a large

and general increase in the school provision of food, the amount of useless dainties bought by the boys continues to indicate a gross and undiminished excess.

Without, then, inquiring yet what ought to be done, let us see the bearing of these facts on the lives of boys and men. The subject is, in my opinion, one of very grave importance.

At the present day it is demanded of a boy that he should master his appetites in so far as one temptation is concerned, that of impurity. In fact, this demand on his powers of self-discipline is made with much urgency. To anticipate a little what I shall say later on, this danger is not common to all boys by any means, but the evil is sufficiently prevalent in extent and startling in its results to have inspired a very widespread alarm among parents and masters. An immense amount of care is taken against it. In all well-conducted schools it is the

object of unceasing vigilance, and meets with a resistance at once deliberate, tactful, and courageous. And no one need doubt that, during the last thirty years, there has been real improvement. But the efforts made have failed of their fair and lawful measure of success because they have been of too narrow and isolated a character. Young boys have been protected with scrupulous care against one species of bodily indulgence, while gluttony has been allowed to continue almost unchecked. Now let me speak quite plainly of the effects of this. Where impurity exists in a school of generally healthy tone, it takes its rise and receives its impetus from boys of fifteen or sixteen years of age, who have a constitutional propensity to it, and whose wills are feebly developed. Up to about fourteen and a half no boy ought ordinarily to be in much danger. After that the battle begins. The wills of

some of them, I say, are feebly developed; why? simply because the idea of restraining their bodily appetites has never for one moment entered their heads. Whatever desires they have hitherto felt they have instantly gratified, and where this has not been the case it has been from want of opportunity, not from choice.

Happily, many are free from the temptation till some years later; others who are assailed by it have had a horror of the sin implanted in them by judicious warning. But be the struggle severe or light, the vast majority enter upon it weighted by previous self-indulgence, and in some cases victory is thereby rendered extremely difficult. Nor is the danger over at seventeen. We have to look ahead, and even if the perils of boyhood are safely met amid surroundings, on the whole, of a very healthy character, and if the same immunity from the worst defilement attends the lad's University

course, what of the years twenty to thirty in the outer world? Now, it is not my wish to paint any picture in over dark colours, but this I do say, that the condition of modern England warns us not to increase by ever so little the severity of the trial for a young man as he goes out into life. Men, however, are of all kinds and temperaments, and some pass through even this unscathed. But is the danger over yet? Can any one candidly say that among middle-aged men, whether married or single, self-control of all kinds, the thorough and rational mastery of the body, is so common that we can afford to neglect the beginnings of grossness and greediness in childhood? From time to time voices of medical men are raised, as they were last summer, to warn us that over-eating is as common as over-drinking, and one plucky person I think there was, who said it was just

as great an evil. It is true that it does not bring men to beat their wives and brain their children, but please remember we are trying to look at this matter from the Christian point of view, and if we judge of their power of stunting the growth of the spiritual life, there is little enough to choose between gluttony and drunkenness. Think of the marvellous machinery of these bodies of ours, their patience, their capacities, their destiny, and do you not feel that over-eating—persistent, portly, respectable over-eating—is a foul vice? We are thinking how your boy can be trained up to manifest the beauty of the Christian character. If he be trained to make his body a willing and docile slave, he will not some day worry his wife about the flavour of every dish on the table; he will not insist on working the servants on Sunday evenings, because he must have his hot dinner; he will

not sit inert and useless for a fixed period after his meal; nor consume time, energy, and money in filling his cellar, and talk for hours with a ludicrous solemnity about the taste of his wine. Look at your jolly, lively little son with his bright keen eye and glad activity. It is grievous to think there is a prison-house closing around him, and that shadows will thicken where all is bright sunlight now. But it is for you to determine to some extent how deep those shadows are to be. Keep him, then, now and always, from the beginnings of animalism, and all its dark unseen results, as you value the cleanness of his soul.

But how? We must see where the mischief begins. Let me anticipate your objection that the schools are largely to blame. They may be, but that is not our subject just now. My business is to speak to you about the homes, and it

is plain that however much the schools may be at fault, some of the mischief is done at home. The symptoms during the first few years of school life are not those which indicate a newly-formed habit of greedy excess, but such as reveal a previous training in which discipline of the appetites has not found a place. The little boys of ten or eleven are completely unconscious of the right relation between themselves and their food. Let us look into this a little more closely.

Food to a healthy person is both a necessity and an enjoyment, and there is no reason why, to the young, it should not be thought of with the same emotions as the morning cold bath. In an ideal state of things, a meal would be taken by a growing lad with the same unconscious zest as a run out of doors on a fine day, or a romp after a grammar lesson. It would not be looked

forward to with an unholy glee, nor cherished regretfully in the memory when it is a thing of the past, but it would be accepted with simplicity tinged with thankfulness, and relished with all sobriety. This is the ideal. We are still some way from it. To understand what the small boy thinks of food, you should inquire of the preparatory schoolmasters, upon whom the flood of greediness pours with its first fresh volume. Much, also, may be learnt from a study of the proletariat of the public schools. At a seminary in Brighton, now no more, where I was brought up, consisting of boys from eight to fourteen, the social position of each individual depended almost entirely on his command of sweets. Public favour rose and fell with the amount of jam he carried round for distribution among his friends at breakfast. During play-hours it would be suddenly noised abroad that so-and-so had "slipped"

(*i.e.* entered a "grub-shop" without leave), and was the possessor of a box of butterscotch; instantly there would be a stir throughout the whole community, similar to that among adults on the news of the discovery of a gold mine. All enmities were quieted, and the voice of calumny was hushed; to stand well with the lucky youth was worth any effort, and indeed I don't remember that the most shameless toadying, even on the part of a professed rival, was reprobated by public opinion. At the public schools the atmosphere changes, and larger interests slowly assert themselves. But it is not for some time that the halo with which the old enjoyments are surrounded fades into the light of common day. I must repeat that the amount of money spent upon unnecessary indulgence is appalling.

Now it seems clear from these facts that the idea the boys have of indulgence of the appetites is a radically wrong one.

Somehow food has come to assume in their lives a position of most pernicious prominence, to be explained partly, no doubt, by the strength of the natural desires in early life, but partly by unwise treatment of the subject in early childhood. Why do mothers cut off delicacies from meals as a common form of punishment? It is of course very difficult to hit upon a more convenient method, and for the time it is certainly efficacious in securing a kind of obedience. But I fail to see what the result in the long run can be, except to throw a glamour round the pleasures of eating, and to produce a reaction when the restraint is removed. Surely the deprivation of dainties does exactly what it is best not to do. It forces upon a boy's attention, and emphasises, the fact that such things are nice, and he must infer that that is *your* view of them. You would, I hope, think it unwise for

the grown-up relations to speak of the delicious taste of certain foods in the presence of children. But that is exactly what this punishment does.

And what must be the effect when the change is made from home to school? That change brings with it fresh opportunities, such as some loose cash, a handy "grub-shop" (probably),[1] and contact with a vitiated public opinion. You have both added to the fuel and applied the spark.

The time has come, however, to notice a formidable answer to all this, consisting of an indictment against schools. First, it may be urged that managers of schools do great wrong by putting these temptations in the boys' way. Next, that the food supplied by the schools is insufficient, and that

[1] It should be remarked, however, that at some preparatory schools nowadays no such thing as a "grub-shop" exists.

money and hampers must be given to supplement it.

I will take the last point first. If any mother has reason to mistrust the provision department of any school, the right course is clear though it is very seldom adopted. She ought to come down and inspect the arrangements herself, carefully note apparent shortcomings, and then discuss them with the authorities, and urge her suggestions. With a very little trouble she would ascertain what is being done, and the possibilities of doing more. She would also learn a strange fact, that when boys nowadays are underfed, it is generally owing to their refusing to eat what is set before them, not because it is unpalatable, but because they have heard some bigger boy speak evil of it. Now, as English school life is ordered on the lines of freedom, it must be admitted that the way to meet this difficulty is not easy

to find. Something like compulsion may be desirable, but it would stop short of forcing boys to eat. In the next place, it may be that the partaking of dainties from hampers just takes the edge off the appetite for dinner, and consequently too little meat is eaten. This is not uncommon, but would you suggest that hampers be discontinued? If such an opinion prevails among parents, the schoolmaster sees very few signs of it.

These and many other like considerations seem to show that the feeding of a large number without waste or extravagance, or stinting or luxury, amid social customs now in vogue both in schools and at home, is a problem of the utmost delicacy. But as this is not part of my subject, I only make these few remarks to show you that the enforcing of necessary (and possible) changes in the food supply is to a large

extent in your hands if you go the right way to work. And before long it will probably be seen that all schools are working towards the ideal state of things: a thoroughly adequate supply of food, independent of all supplement.

But in the meantime, ought there to be these temptations to greediness at school?

The best justification for the present state of things is the same as may be given for the existence of schools at all, viz. that they are institutions designed for the training of the young in the duties of citizenship, and that such training involves trial. If boys were to be spared all trial, perhaps there would be no schools, or at any rate there would be different ones from those now existing. But this is not the idea on which Englishmen are brought up. We continue to act on the supposition that character is strengthened by being tested, and there-

fore we do not strain every nerve to banish all trial from public school life. There are a great many other arguments for the existence of schools, such as the nuisance boys become at home, the need of making friends, the stimulus of competition in work and play, which act upon parents up and down the country with varying force; but we may, I hope, assume that so great an institution as school life is partly due to some such lofty educational demand as I have indicated. Now among the trials not yet swept away, stands the "grub-shop," like an old tower among modern buildings and civilised improvements; and the best defence I can give for it is that it may become the instrument of training a boy in the management of money, knowledge of the laws of health and self-control. The question, I admit, might be argued at great length, but in the meantime "grub-shops" are a

fact, and as practical people we have to think what regulations of the home life will be a good preparation for them. Here, then, are some precepts which I submit for your consideration.

Never allow any criticism, adverse or favourable, to be passed at meal-time upon the food.

Arrange that the food be plain, well cooked, and *varied*. Never mind the thought and trouble that this involves. You should think much about it, that your children may think little.

Never punish by withholding, except (*a*) for aggressive greediness, such as filching fritters from the tray outside the dining-room; (*b*) when it is wished to create a general household gloom consequent on evil-doing. A curtailing of dessert would then be desirable.

Discourage all reserving of dainty morsels as *bonnes bouches* in the corner of the plate.

You will observe that these modest suggestions do not aim at fostering any germs of asceticism in the young. That may be in the future. For the present, strive in every way to make your boy take his food without comment, or misgiving, and see that it is thoroughly simple, wholesome, and varied.

CHAPTER V

LEAVING HOME

Nobody can be surprised at this event causing a great deal of anxiety. Whatever it be that chiefly excites a parent's solicitude, whether bodily, mental, or spiritual welfare, each and all are thought to be submitted to a peculiar trial by the change from home to school. There may be contusions at football, or wet socks at other times; the early teaching in the rudiments of learning may be upset by misdirected efforts in class: and finally, temptations of all kinds are supposed to be lying in wait for the moral and religious life of the child.

Now in a sense there is truth in all this. The principle that healthy growth of any kind cannot be ensured without exercise, and that exercise means trial, is still recognised in schools. But parents should know that their anxiety about the trials of school life is coloured by the reminiscences of men who were boys from twenty to thirty years ago, and whose young days are apt to grow more and more eventful as life advances. And it is undeniable that civilisation has made enormous strides of late in all schools. There is far less roughness, less coarseness, less bullying: there is better teaching, better feeding, and a much better relation between man and boy. More especially is this true of the preparatory schools, in which—speaking of them collectively—the improvement is most striking. Forty years ago private schools were numerous, but there was hardly one that I have

heard of where there was at all adequate feeding, any real trust in the boys, any sound system of teaching, or anything like watchful control of the boys in play-hours. The ushers were frequently refugees from other professions, and of a low social type; and in consequence of all this the moral tone was in many places abominably bad. Notwithstanding one or two notable exceptions, this picture is not over-coloured. It should be remembered, however, that here and there, in spite of great carelessness and neglect, the life led by the boys was innocent, though probably dull and idle. Evil happened not to have been planted, and so a few of these schools enjoyed a precarious immunity from mischief, for which the management of them was not responsible.

Nowadays all this is changed. With very moderate care parents can secure places for their sons in admirably-man-

aged private schools, where men of the highest character and of the loftiest educational aims have successfully undertaken the control of thousands of little boys. Unshackled for the most part by vicious local traditions, and commanding as they do, owing to various social causes, the services of excellent assistant masters, they have rendered a large number of these schools as safe abodes for a boy—in respect of the graver evils of school life—as his own home. Whatever may be said, good must have come of this. The morals of the upper classes of England are better than they would have been without the preparatory schools.

Still, the moment of parting is an anxious one, and the question arises, Are there no subjects on which a parent's warning is advisable? There is certainly one subject still which demands a special warning. Now, the difficulties which

beset us here are of two kinds. Suppose a mother takes upon herself to caution her boy against certain dangers from which he has hitherto been free at home; she may suggest to him unwholesome thoughts, and stimulate the very evil she is dreading. Or, in her anxiety to avoid saying too much, she may so veil her meaning that the little boy, if he understands anything of it, may gather an altogether exaggerated and morbid idea of the state of the case. I am anxious to impress upon you that with imaginative boys this may and does occur, and it is therefore evident that whatever be said should be regulated to some extent by the mother's knowledge of her son's temperament. If he is refined and sensitive, and one who is sure to shrink with loathing from uncleanness, take care lest he conjure up in anticipation a something far more terrible and mysterious than the reality. Cases

have occurred of little boys being thus overwarned till the expectation of evil has preyed upon their spirits and utterly deranged their judgment, leading to the most complicated troubles. So I would suggest that more emphasis be laid on the warning in the case of a callous than of a sensitive boy.

In any case, at the age of nine or ten, when school life generally begins, there need be no serious difficulty. Suppose a mother, bearing all these risks in mind, were merely to tell the boy in an unusually grave manner, just before he left her, that he was going to a new set of surroundings where he would find boys of all kinds, and some of them might perhaps want him to talk about or do things which he ought not, and which he would know at the time were wrong and nasty, and that she hoped when the time came he would remember what she said, and would have

nothing whatever to do with them. Suppose it were nothing more than that: yet she has done a great deal. She has fortified him against ignorance without enlightening him. And it is a great point that the boy, when the trial comes, should know that those whom he loves are aware of it. Many a school-boy has been led into evil because he believes what is generally told him by the baser sort among his companions, that "these are things your mother and sisters know nothing of." The temptation is worse by far when combined with a feeling of loneliness.

With regard to the main question of precautionary warnings, a correspondent has strongly advocated the father undertaking the task of giving some clear instruction (of course only in outline) in the laws of nature and the processes of generation and birth. Many years ago, I considered this a possible way of meet-

ing the difficulty, but I hesitated to recommend it publicly, because it seemed to me that the relation established between fathers and sons is in some cases too delicate to allow of any such teaching being given. And I still think that this is so. But a larger experience and consideration has materially deepened the conviction that, wherever it is possible, a little boy should be fortified with knowledge, wholesomely imparted, of facts which he must otherwise inevitably learn in an unwholesome, mutilated, and grievously misleading form. Beyond all question it would be a great safeguard. Sound teaching would allay curiosity, or if any still existed, the boy would go with a question to his father or mother rather than to an ignorant and perhaps coarse-minded schoolfellow. The gain would be very great. And if curiosity were allayed, evil talk would be deprived of its chief stimulus, and the whole set

of notions subsequently formed on this, the great mystery of life, would be derived from clean and truthful words. We must not forget Edward Thring's saying—"As men believe, so will they act." Though fully aware of the difficulties and objections of all sorts, I trust that it will come to be more and more recognised as the duty of either the father or the mother to protect in this way the son who is leaving home for the first time.[1]

When your boy is entering into public school life there should be an increase of vigilance on your part, and now and then a question, to ascertain the character of the new state of life. It may be

[1] Cf. the wise remarks of Rev. E. Layard, *Mothers in Council*, vol. i. p. 104. A correspondent reminds me that, on the medical side, certain precautions could be taken which are very generally ignored. The subject cannot be treated of here, or even indicated, further than by the suggestion that, when a boy is from seven to twelve years of age, the parent would do wisely to consult a doctor as to the special requirements of *cleanliness* in relation to the main subject of this chapter.

laid down as axiomatic that the assistance which can be rendered to a headmaster by plain speaking on the part of parents *who are sure of their facts*, is of priceless value. I believe the days are for ever passed away when schoolmasters would resent such openness as an insult to their establishments. Indeed, I will go farther and say that for a parent to gain clear knowledge of some serious mischief, and then to say nothing, is the unkindest course it is possible to adopt. In spite of every conceivable precaution there must be risk, and there may be mischief, for the combating of which, co-operation between parents and schoolmasters is absolutely necessary. It is true that serious mistakes are sometimes made, and that in any case, after free communication has been established between parent and schoolmaster, the task for the latter is one of the utmost delicacy. It is true,

again, that boys often exaggerate. But still there is no doubt what your duty is. As soon as you have reason to believe that an unsatisfactory state of things exists, and you can in any way localise it in the school, let the head-master know.

We will suppose, then, the first year or so of school life safely passed through, and the boy's thoughts and energies freely occupied in all sorts of wholesome pursuits. It is doubtful if the mother can take any further useful action. For some boys about fourteen or fifteen a warning is most advisable. This would, however, be best given by the father or by a doctor. Again, a boy nearing the age of twenty, needs a few words of caution from the father; and, failing that, he could be given some of the publications of the White Cross Army, or be talked to by a doctor whose opinions are thoroughly sound. Even for a widowed mother there is no prac-

tical difficulty in these alternatives nowadays. People, however, are apt to forget that there are many boys who are quite free from this particular temptation, and that if every care is taken about such matters as food, exercise, plenty of occupation, etc., the number likely to fall into serious trouble during boyhood ought to be small. This, of course, does not mean that as manhood approaches there is no danger, but rather that vice during the time of growth is unnatural, and can be very adequately combated if parents and schoolmasters work together with vigilance, hopefulness, and persistency.

The conviction, however, has been forcing itself upon me ever since I had to do with boys, that the mother's work in guarding her son against this evil—and indeed all others—is of paramount importance, and if it is to be successful, must begin in the earlier years. All habits of self-control and rectitude that

you implant are good; but those which have to do with the discipline of the appetites are absolutely indispensable. This simple truth is certainly far too little considered. It is true that in certain cases the facts seem to point to an inherited taint, some strain in the blood reverting back to an almost forgotten ancestry, and that against such all precautions are unavailing. But this only happens very occasionally. Leaving such cases on one side, I can confidently affirm that where father and mother have worked together to ensure the control of the appetites in the nursery and afterwards, and have grounded their teaching on religious principle, there is hardly any peril of this sort which their son is not fit to meet. I do not wish to underrate the danger of evil companionships, or to minimise the great responsibility that rests upon the schoolmasters. But the fact remains that a boy's behaviour in

presence of these temptations, from whatever quarter they arise, is the outcome of his *early* moral training. And yet one often hears expressions implying that a moral collapse at school or college has had no antecedents. This, of course, is impossible. There must have been antecedents, and in nearly every case they are traceable.[1]

The following extract is from a letter. It bears only indirectly on the subject of this chapter, but the hints contained in it are too plainly based on a ripe experience and sound judgment to be omitted :—

I wish that you had devoted a paragraph to what seems to me the very important subject of letter-writing. Very good, careful mothers often seem to me to think that when children are at school they can do nothing for them beyond send-

[1] Let me add an isolated but very practical hint. If you find that your son is having beer or meat given to him for supper at 9 P.M. or thereabouts, insist on both being at once stopped.

ing new clothing or a hamper. Others regret that their children have, by continued absence at school, more or less lost touch of home. . . . I consider it essential that they should have details of everything going on at home, little references to books read together or conversations enjoyed in the holidays; and constant assurances of the extreme interest with which all that they can tell of school life, of lessons, or of games, is read at home.

If a mother has time to read one of the books that her boy is doing at school, it cheers him immensely to be asked in his letters how far he has read, and to be told which passages she particularly likes, and which she finds difficult. I have often felt sorry to learn through my children how few of their schoolfellows received long letters regularly. I always wrote to my boys at school a long letter on Saturday to arrive on Sunday, and either a short letter or post-card during the week—and all events of great family interest were told to them at once. If this be combined with a grateful, genial tone about those who teach them and with interest in their studies, it will not interfere with their studies: quite the contrary. When I speak of long letters I do not mean clever letters. The value of such letters consists in their being the impress of the writer. They may be about the cocks and hens, or about Mr. Gladstone's last

speech—it matters little, so long as the child reading them feels that his mother is talking to him, and that his home is about him as he reads. Only let the writing to him be viewed as a duty that cannot be put aside.

Even ill health need not prevent its fulfilment. I have had to write many letters lying down, others when my eyes were weak, and I could only take a peep now and then to see that I began my lines in the right place. Children are very adaptable. If home letters are few or short, they grieve at first, then grow accustomed to the privation; and when they return for the holidays their mothers deplore that they are rough and unmanageable, and altogether so changed. And this when nothing has been done to keep them in touch with home or to sustain the motherly influence unimpaired.

Home correspondence ought perhaps to be viewed as a branch of the important subject of sympathy. All children need sympathy, but boys most, because it is less easily obtained by them. A boy *always* accustomed to home sympathy, *unbroken by absence*, cannot find pleasure in forbidden things; they are dreary, simply because he cannot talk or write of, and have sympathy about, them.

These words are worth a whole cloud

of high-sounding educational principles. They reveal an atmosphere of home life and affection which many people sigh for in vain, forgetting that success in these matters is only attained by patience, method, and self-denial. Some of my readers will recall the instance of the number of letters sent to the little Samuel Wilberforce by his father.

CHAPTER VI

MONEY

This is a subject grievously neglected in home life. Think of the difficulties that will belong to it when your boys come to man's estate, and let me remind you that no subject occupies so large a space in the moral teaching of the Gospels as the management of money and property. There is, in short, only one set of responsibilities in store for your son comparable to this in complexity; I mean those connected with matrimony. And yet ninty-nine boys out of a hundred plunge into both, with-

out guidance, preparation, or principle. English education is not yet perfect.

Schoolmasters are often asked how much pocket money they would recommend as a fair amount for a boy going to school. The question is not an unreasonable one, but singularly unimportant compared with this which is never asked, "What ought he to do with it when he has got it?" Unless he has been previously trained in his duties towards his money, he will mismanage it at school whether he gets much or little.

Now, a child is entrusted with very small sums from time to time, to spend, I suppose, in little indulgences or in Christmas presents. When he goes to school he has more, and as he grows older the amount increases, and with the increase comes a more complicated set of duties. Very possibly there is a school mission to support, and a fraction of his possessions is given to that.

Here again facts can be ascertained; as compared with the amount spent in indulgence, the total given in charity by school-boys is a beggarly pittance. And yet people wonder at the niggardliness of adults. The explanation is that never having been taught the duty and the joy of giving, in their early life, they have contrived to frame a rule of charity for themselves, on which they act for the most part with singular consistency. It is that expressed in the cynical definition of the national school-girl: "Charity is giving away what you don't want yourself."

Now, without the least wish to exaggerate or to dwell upon the dark side of things, I think you will agree with me in thinking the bounty of modern England a very long way below the Gospel standard, and even far below that which might fairly be expected of civilised man in a great and wealthy

country. So without any discussion of that point, let us think of the practical effort that may be made at home to diminish the evil.

It is beyond all question wrong to give a boy money without teaching him that a proportion of it belongs to God. While he is very young it is easy to train him to put by something for the poor-box out of every shilling he receives, *as a matter of course.* Why in the world should this be deferred? and till what time? The early possession of money is ingraining one of two ideas deep into his little mind perhaps never to be eradicated, either that he is a steward, or that he is the owner, of the cash. No one, who is willing to call to mind the parable of the rich fool, need be in doubt which is the Christian view of money. There seems to be a vague idea that at some time during school life a boy is to rise to the idea of almsgiving, and never fall from it again. That is to say,

when the opportunities for self-indulgence are multiplied, when control is diminished, when the complexity of money management is increasing every year, Harry is suddenly to become a careful keeper of accounts, and by systematic self-denial to contribute freely and cheerfully to the school mission. If this is the hope, it is seldom realised.

There is only one thing to be done. Get him to enter on paper every sum he receives from his earliest years, and to set by *voluntarily* a portion of it for the poor, and see that the portion is large enough to encroach on his enjoyment and make itself felt. All this a mother can do perfectly well. Then, when he is at school, control should be exercised earnestly and constantly lest he gradually become steeped in the vicious notions around him, and cease to look upon his money as a trust.

How different would the "social problems" of the present day be, if the sons

of the well-to-do had been all along brought up on these lines!

The further question arises whether a boy should be trusted with an allowance, and if so, at what age? As to the age, and taking full account of the great diversities of boys' business faculties, I am inclined to think it might well be earlier than is generally the case. The great thing to aim at is a graduation of responsibility as years advance. Ordinarily there is an increase at the time of the entrance into the preparatory school, and again when public school life begins. After that there is, in my opinion, too long a pause before the next step—the allowance, considering that before the boy is sixteen he has grown appreciably in common sense. Many parents withhold an annual allowance till nearly twenty, some till eighteen. I would suggest that at fifteen or sixteen half-yearly allowances be begun, coupled with

the strongest assurances that improvidence will mean privation. At first a little supervision by questioning would be necessary, and if the burden is thought too great, the provision of clothes could still be retained in the parents' hands. Indeed there is some reason to fear that many boys understand the value of sixpence before they distinguish good underclothing from bad. This fact necessitates care. Only let me plead for gradual increase of responsibility. By eighteen any ordinary boy ought to be able, after such preparation, to pay for his clothes, travelling, presents, and casual wants, besides devoting his proportion in charity, and yet to confine himself rigidly to his allotted sum. It is, however, most important that sufficient confidence between parent and son should exist to ensure an open frankness in the event of liabilities being incurred. Otherwise no one knows what may happen.

Further, the parent should explain beforehand the probable arrival by post of money-lenders' overtures, models of caligraphy, but dangerous traps for a needy younger son who is afraid to speak out. Instructions should be added to return these documents unstamped.[1]

By such training your boy will be fitted to cope with penury should it befall him : while, if, at his coming of age, he is to be burdened with a large fortune, he may grow up to be a really beneficent wealthy man.

[1] Unless, of course, proceedings are taken under Lord Herschell's Act, an abstract of the provisions of which is given in Appendix II.

CHAPTER VII

SECULAR TEACHING

This part of a boy's home training is often, and in some cases unavoidably, left to a governess. It is, however, more than probable that where the grounding in common knowledge is wholly given over by the parents, there will be a loss. Just as the mother recognises that she must claim a good large portion of the child's day away from the nurse, to prevent the nurse absorbing his affection, so, if she can, she ought to act towards the governess. Otherwise the unpleasant alternative which is presented in the case of the schoolmaster comes into view here.

Either the child will love knowledge, and, gradually dissociating it from his mother, transfer much of his affection to his governess, or he will continue to love his mother as the dearest thing in the world, putting the governess second, and knowledge nowhere. If you have a really capable governess, look out for the first evil ; if an incapable one, beware of the second. I think it will be found that where both dangers are successfully met, it has been due to the mother securing a capable governess, but taking care to lay the foundations of knowledge herself first, and keeping as good a hold on the later teaching as the home life allows.

The worth of secular teaching is its power in developing character. The love of knowledge for its own sake is a beautiful characteristic, and conversely the attitude of an idle boy towards knowledge means a moral loss. For a

man to grow up with a contempt for language, the chief vehicle of the greatest thoughts that have ever been uttered; or for number, the expression of the laws of succession and space; or for physical science, the revelation of God in nature, — means a grievous impoverishing of his higher self; and whether this be due to bad teaching at school or to lack of home association, he starts in life a maimed and stunted being, and ill equipped for the work of gaining any hold on eternal truths. Youngsters with feeble brains can of course never become learned men. But they should know, as far as may be, what knowledge is, if they are to reach their moral and spiritual maturity. And the greatness of the task is a reason not for your abandoning of it to another, but for your undertaking it yourselves.

But I hear already the familiar cry that you have no time. Well, experi-

ence seems to show pretty clearly that when something is to be done, the people who do it are not those with the most leisure, but those who feel its importance, and they are generally those with the least leisure. Now if you do not feel the importance of bringing up your sons, you certainly will be too busy to teach them. You may be absorbed in looking after other people's children. Why not your own first? Or you are conscious of being behindhand with the last new book, and if you do not read new books you know you will not be able to talk "intelligently" when you dine out. There is a vast expenditure of time given by modern ladies to preparing themselves to talk intelligently; but alas! I cannot think that even this lofty aim ought for a single moment to come between you and your duty. You will read plenty of new books and old ones too if you prepare yourself for teaching,

and if they are not the books your neighbour cares to talk about, can you not survive it? Having become a mother, you are called to be a teacher, and a teacher you will be, whether you will or no. You will teach that boy of yours either to do his own work, or somebody else's, according to the course you now adopt about this very matter. And he will, moreover, learn very speedily that you either do or do not care about his growth in wisdom beyond anything else in the world; and the effect of that little bit of knowledge on his after life will, I promise you, be a lasting one. You are called to be a teacher, and "you have no life outside your life's work." I am not pleading that you should learn everything, but that you should ground yourself in the elements of three or four subjects that you may at least begin to ground him.

"Oh but I have no turn whatever for

teaching: it is not my line: I never could have the patience."

Small boys, we all agree, are at times supremely exasperating. But if you have not patience with your own, who is to show it them? If you have not patience, it means that you have not love; at least, when one breaks down the other will. Every failure in patience on your part means a loosening of the bond by which you have to hold that boy back from ruin. You have no right to expect that any one will hold him back if you do not. Believe me, the temptations of all kinds lying before him are so tremendous that you will need all your love for him, and all your strength, and you must not weaken both at once by giving way to impatience towards your own child. If you say that you are not born with patience, I would urge you to think on these things and acquire it. It is a matter of will and prayer, and the

effort that it will cost you will be a later stage in the self-sacrifice which began with his existence, and which ought to be the ruling principle of your life towards the boy. It is an effort perfectly possible for you to make; and it will tell in many ways for good on all that is most lovable in your own character as well as in his.

"But I know nothing." This formidable objection would seem to be fatal to any teaching. But if strictly true, it only means that the sphere of your efforts will be curtailed. You must learn, and give time to learning what you know he will have to learn, be it only just the groundwork of one or two subjects. You *must* teach him the Bible stories, and they take some learning. Extend your efforts, then, into at least one subject more, and something will be gained: and please remember that the duty is binding, or you will not do it.

But a great deal of this timidity, diffidence, and disrelish comes from a grave misconception of what teaching is. You perhaps expect that you will have to grapple with some rule in arithmetic, we will say, rapidly expound it, and set the boy a sum; and when he has done enough go on to the next. Or you will take a piece of history, read it aloud to him, and expect him to remember it. This would be very poor sort of work; but teaching is very unlike this. It is, for the teacher, a process of learning, and he has to get right inside the child's mind, no matter how diminutive it is, and look at the world with his eyes, no matter how innocent they are, and this he will never do without learning a great deal about the child's life, and something also about the subject he is trying to help him to grasp. The questions you put to the child, and still more the questions he will put

to you, will lead you to learn many things now quite hidden from you. As a general rule, teaching is not talking to the child, but by careful hints, subtle encouragement, and warm sympathy, getting the child to find things out for himself. Everything you tell the child, which he had no idea of before, is a languid joy to him compared to the delight he feels at finding something out for himself. And if you must tell him something, the more you prepare his mind by building up a little knowledge previously, and by exciting his curiosity in every way, the better he will assimilate it. And do you really mean to forego this, all for the sake of the new books and the intelligent talk ?

The general principles of teaching are now to be read about in fairly accessible writings ; but some leading hints may be thus stated :—

(*a*) Proceed always from the concrete

to the abstract. Hence do not let him learn rules till he forms them for himself from the examples.

(*b*) Go step by step, and constantly revise the ground traversed. This will seem uncommonly slow work, but it means progress and growth.

(*c*) Appeal incessantly to the eye as well as the ear.

(*d*) Test most vigilantly his idea of the meanings of words he uses.

(*e*) If you think he can possibly guess what you are going to tell him, even in a piece of history, give him the chance.

(*f*) If you must tell him new things, let them be very few at a time, and be sure that his retailing of them be rigorously accurate.

(*g*) Employ his hands where possible.

It would be easy to make a long list of such suggestions, but in truth everything depends on the way they are carried out. One great art in teaching is to know there

is an art: to try all reasonable means of learning the principles, and trust to your own sympathy and zeal for the application of them.

Perhaps I ought to notice another possible objection to this plea about teaching. You may have a wholesome dread of becoming didactic. If any one is as fond of teaching as all this would imply, surely she becomes a bore. This is a dread word, and must not be lightly profaned. I believe it was the late Lord Houghton who remarked that in conversation you must always give a schoolmaster ten points out of twenty, and I trust that no hint of mine will ever have anything to do with fixing on you this unspeakable stigma. The modern spirit infinitely prefers wickedness to boredom. If the bringing up of a child to become a complete Christian man cannot be achieved without the mother fancying she may be called

a bore, even though it be by not the wisest people alive, surely there is ample reason for relinquishing the attempt. Ample enough, I dare say. But in reality we are not between the devil and the deep sea. So far from there being a choice between the two things, —the combination of a good teacher and a bore, or that of a fascinating talker and no teacher, — the truth is that the first two cannot be combined. There is no such thing as a bore who is also a good teacher. He can be many things; he can be a good magistrate, and a man of accurate information, and a good judge of wine; but if he ever tries to teach, he does it badly. He prates, and harangues, and "holds forth" to his scholars; he tries to thump and batter facts into their heads, instead of guiding the activity of their minds, and after a few hours of this he is still willing and eager to repeat the process to his friends.

But in proportion as you learn to become a real teacher you will learn sympathy with other minds, and no one can be a bore who has that; you will come to welcome thoughts from any other quarter too kindly to be anxious to air your own; and your own craving after knowledge, that you might have wherewithal to feed your child's understanding, will show you what there is in the world to know; what thorough knowledge, even of a very little, really costs; and from discipline of this sort there will grow in you three qualities which are not to be found in a bore—humility, patience, and consideration.

In conclusion, may I appeal for an effort to be made, where possible, towards kindling boys with the love of some such pursuit as gardening? When I consider the wholesomeness, the discipline, the encouragement of observation, the lessons of tenderness and patience which

it gives, and when I reflect that the power of gratifying this most refined taste lingers far into old age, and outlives the shrinking of muscle and the stiffening of the knee, I assure you that, in spite of a strong, almost fanatical love of ball games, I sometimes feel doubtful if cricket and football do as much for a man's whole life as the love and tending of plants and flowers. For the somewhat artificial conditions of school life these great games are indispensable. We have to face problems arising from the presence of boys in the mass, of whom some have rude shapeless instincts, and are strangely inclined to spend their leisure in lounging, or violence, or vapid talk, and pampering of the appetites. Some are anti-social, and prefer solitary novel-reading, or aimless unconvivial dreaming, to the life that calls for a sense of citizenship and unity; others—indeed a good many—are likely to turn

out grave and useful members of society, but have at present a feeble linguistic sense and slowly maturing brains, and are apparently resting for a while in the solidifying bovine stage, harmless, but inert and ready for deterioration. For all of these and many more, athleticism is a sovereign safeguard. It catches the moody and the turbulent, the anæmic and the boisterous, in its ample stream, and sweeps along good and bad alike, by dint of a powerful common interest quite social and wholesome in tone. But it is needless for me to wax eloquent on this theme. What I wish to insist on is that, however necessary at school, athletics do not require special stimulus at home. They need not be snubbed, but they ought to be tempered and supplemented. The enormous benefits that spring from them should not blind us to the fact that undiluted doses of them stunt the

moral and intellectual growth of boyhood. An athlete seldom takes a walk, and knows nothing of the neighbourhood, cannot distinguish a buttercup from a cowslip, gives no heed to the notes of birds, and thinks it childish to look at a butterfly's wing. Indeed, if his games are combined, as they often are, with shooting, his attitude towards the animal kingdom is one of ignorance or hostility, excepting towards his pony, his bull-dog, and his ferret. But in some few homes this narrowness is counteracted by keeping up the early love of observation and country life through quite other interests; and of all interests surely there is none better than gardening. Something of that nature is wanted. The talk of boys at school shows that their interests are in a narrow groove. They spend—or used to —hour upon hour in reviewing the shifting phases in the little world of games, or in retailing derogatory stories about the

masters. And it is well, very well, that there should be topics in which all can join. But please do not let us forget that our wish is to turn the boy by degrees into a complete man. The time comes "when the grinders are few," and when the enthralling athletic pleasures must give way, even if there be nothing else to take their place. Take care, then, that your boy does not enter on middle life to deplore the lost tastes of childhood, which might have been quickened and were not.

CHAPTER VIII

CHOOSING A PROFESSION

THERE can hardly be a doubt that the difficulty of choosing professions for boys is both serious and growing. It is more widely felt than ever that work is honourable and idleness calamitous, and, moreover, there is reason to believe that the number of young men who can afford to be merely consumers of the produce of the earth is, in proportion to the population, smaller than it used to be. Anyhow, the number of well-dressed boys out in search of a livelihood is enormous, and seems to be increasing. But the number of available employments remains what it

was. Perhaps the questions that arise out of these facts belong more to fathers than to mothers, but they are too important to pass by.

Schoolmasters are constantly assailed by the familiar inquiry as to the future of the boys in his charge, and at the Universities the same question is asked, but in a tone of increased urgency. This denotes a wrong state of things. Under no circumstances ought a lad to reach adolescence without an idea what he is going to do. In the first place, such a vacuous state of mind is detrimental to his work, and spoils the concentration of his energies which is required of him if he is to progress in any direction. In any case, as we have seen, there is for him a good deal of mystery surrounding the claims that are made upon him to use his time in the pursuit of learning. Still, if what he is going to do is settled, it is

not very difficult to show a reasonable boy of sixteen or seventeen that future success depends upon present effort. Only, the future must not be a blank. In the next place, the indifference of many boys as to their own career may continue. It is useless to expect them all to have aspirations, and you may very easily find your son enjoying life till he is twenty-two without making a single serious attempt to solve this or any other problem of existence. I need hardly point out that in this case practical difficulties are likely to arise.

Let me offer this suggestion. When he turns sixteen or seventeen, and his powers are pretty well known, he should be told that his choice lies between two or three alternative professions, and that before the end of the next six months he must make up his mind which it is to be, or the matter will be decided for him. There is a certain simplicity

about this proposal which is not often to be found in matters of great practical importance The result will be that for half a year your son will have something to think about, and I could name many young men who have not been similarly blessed for a single day. It will cause him to measure himself and his faculties, and to take account of practical conditions in subjects which it can do him no harm to consider. If he be destined for the army or navy, the decision probably will have to be made earlier.

This, however, introduces some very serious questions. Suppose that at seventeen your son betrays no special fitness for any career, and that the avenues to a livelihood are blocked by examinations which his best friend could never suppose him capable of passing. There are two professions which are still supposed to be open to him, not because he can rise in

them, but because one is thought to be, and the other is known to be, not yet overcrowded. One is schoolmastering, the other is "the Church," as John Bull still calls the profession of holy orders.

It is to be feared that the choice of one of these careers is in many cases decided for no other reason than the one here given: they are supposed not to be overcrowded: they are chosen *faute de mieux*. But it is not commonly known that the effect of young men thus heedlessly drifting into them is most disastrous. We will take the case of schoolmasters first. The market is full, not of men who have carefully prepared themselves for a great and noble undertaking — such, indeed, hardly exist anywhere in England—but of excellent athletes and competent scholars pressing the claims of their attainments—especially the athletics—upon the attention of headmasters and

governing bodies of schools. You may ask why the market is full, when the work is known to be not only very important, but exceedingly difficult, and in many cases ill paid. The answer is a melancholy one.

There is little or nothing to prevent large numbers of easy-going lads, who have fought shy of other professions because a preliminary training was in each case necessary, from drifting at the last minute into either "tutoring" or "the Church," since in one case no training is required, and in the other quite the minimum. No sensible man would ask an untrained architect to build his house, or an untrained farmer to manage his land. Nor would he dream of committing his son's body to an untrained doctor; but he is perfectly willing that the boy's mind should be handed over to a youth totally ignorant how to teach, and his soul to a man

who has not given six months to the study of the Christian faith. This anomaly does not exist, as far as I know, in any European country but ours; and it stamps the English as a stupid people. Other evidence might be produced, but none so absolutely irrefragable as this, unless it be the excuses that are alleged for it. This, however, need not concern us now. The result is that it is always possible for your son to drift into the profession of a schoolmaster or a clergyman. We have to consider if it is advisable that he should do so.

Let me say at once that a schoolmaster unfit for his work is a phenomenon at once piteous and pernicious. The mischief that he does himself is no less than that which he inflicts on others. He ruins his own temper; he bewilders the moral sense of the young, and degrades the good name of a school; and finally, after becoming a laughing-

stock to boys, a sorrow to his colleagues, and a nightmare to himself, he is turned loose on the world at thirty years of age, with failure in every shape stamped upon him. But supposing things are not so bad as this; supposing he has some of the qualifications required, but from lack of interest or special brilliancy can only secure a vacancy in a very humble school. Far be it from me to say that wherever there are boys to teach, the work may not be ennobled by self-devotion and true enthusiasm; but is your son self-devoted or enthusiastic? In any case it is your duty to count the cost. He may easily get work amid narrow, mercenary, petty surroundings, with wretched remuneration, and without prospect of promotion. Pestalozzi made something of the problem, but nearly a hundred years have passed since he was in his prime, and the like of him has not since been seen.

The consideration of the work of a clergyman will, I trust, lead us still more directly to the same conclusion. The one thing that is certainly fatal to any true success, or indeed to any real worthy endeavour, is to drift into such a career without due deliberation and forethought. This, however, does not need stating in the case of holy orders so emphatically as in that of schoolmastering. People still shrink from advising the care of souls as a *pis aller*.

How, then, does this bear on the subject of the education of boys? You will say that by dwelling on the deterrents to these two professions I have only made the choice more difficult than before, and that, whereas there were two refuges for the destitute, now there are none.

The truth is that as long as you look upon any professions as refuges, so long you will be tempted to let your boy float along down the stream, in the

vague hope that something will turn up. But once realise that to drift aimlessly into a profession is to drift into failure, more or less grievous in proportion to the greatness of the work involved, then you will determine to insist on a decision being made in due time. And this makes all the difference, especially in regard to a clerical career. There are countless reasons against your boy becoming a clergyman merely because he has found other avenues closed to him. But there is no reason whatever why this profession should not be suggested to him at sixteen as one of the alternatives, supposing, of course, you see that he has an honest and good heart. There are many lads in the country quite well fitted to prepare for holy orders, as far as disposition goes, who yet do not give the matter a thought, simply because their parents have shrunk from suggesting such a course to them, for fear of forcing them. It sounds plausible enough to

leave them to make their own choice, and not to bias them, and so forth; but if you talk of other professions and never mention this one, you are biassing them against it. The fairest thing to do is to bring the matter before the boys at the right age, and explain what the clerical profession means, just as you would explain what colonial life means. It is impossible that they should know the truth about one any more than the other, unless some one tells them. If you are inclined to make much of the need of a call from God before a boy can decide on such a point, remember that the call may come through you quite as easily and as truly as through any other channel. If, on the other hand, you are inclined to be influenced by mundane considerations, and to feel that though the work of a clergyman's life is good, yet the pay is miserable, I would remind you that unless you do something,

your boy may soon find himself without either work or pay. There must be scores of young barristers, doctors, architects, etc., in this plight. The uncertainty of a curate ever being able to support a family is felt by many parents to be an objection to the profession; but such as it is, it applies to others too.

An appeal, at any rate, may be made to parents to consider the urgent need that exists for young men of purpose, zeal, and fair abilities for the work of the Ministry. As far as the welfare of England is concerned, there is no profession in which your boy can do the country so much good; and if he is by nature fitted for the work, and anything that you do or omit to do hinders him from undertaking it, you are making yourself responsible for a serious loss to the community, and probably also for an injury to himself. It may be that you fear a change of his tone and way of looking at things

before he reaches twenty-three years of age; and undoubtedly it does happen that youths leave the Universities uncertain what "school of thought" they mean to honour with their support. But even if this be granted, it does not constitute a reason against the decision being made in due time. If it must be changed, you are no worse off than if it had not been made at all. And it seems pretty certain that the majority of lads who change their minds about joining the Ministry do so not because of the assault of honest intellectual doubts, but from a growing love of the secular side of life. It is possible, I think, to foresee at seventeen if his affections are likely to take this direction.

In any case, let me repeat that aimlessness is injurious to a boy's mental, moral, and spiritual growth, and can generally be prevented.

CHAPTER IX

IDEALS

Any one who has followed thus far our review of the questions which present themselves in home training will, I trust, be a little nearer than before to seeing the greatness of the work, and the immensity of the issues which are involved. And the very smallest appreciation of the main conditions of success must surely induce in any honest parent a feeling of profound humility. How bewildering in many ways the prospect is! How secret the processes of a boy's moral growth, and what tenderness and respect are claimed from his elders by his reserve as he passes from childhood to manhood!

These truths, if borne in mind, will foster a spirit of humility. And the want of humility among trainers of the young shows how wide and deep is the ignorance of simple facts. There is, for instance, a "cock-sure" style of parent to be met with who will triumphantly assure you that he has followed a certain method with all his children, and as he has had to bring up ten, etc. etc. Or again, among schoolmasters of long standing it is common to hear the plea, "All I can say is that for twenty years and more I have done so and so," concerning some small but intricate problem of school life, as if the speaker's long persistence in certain practices were an irrefragable proof that they were the best possible. And yet, wherever character is concerned, infinite variety has to be taken into account. How absurd, then, to assume that what A does to his boy B, will necessarily be right for C to do to D; or even that A,

finding his method succeed with B, was right in extending it to E, F, G, etc., for more than twenty years! It surely is far more reasonable to believe that quite different methods ought to be adopted towards different characters by different characters.

Besides which, in all that concerns the higher questions of intellectual, moral, and religious training, it is almost impossible to trace a successful result to a given cause with anything like scientific accuracy, and so we have, I take it, pretty good reason not to be anything but very diffident in our endeavours, and very humble in our successes.

On the other hand, there is a sort of self-distrust among mothers which is not of the right kind. There are many who feel that they know something about girls, but nothing about boys, beyond the fact, nowadays often insisted on, that the dangers ahead of them in life are

simply terrific, that boys are reserved and odd, change altogether at school, think it fine to forget all their mothers' advice, make bad friends, and, in short, are more trouble and anxiety than any ten girls.

Of course there is much truth in all this. I firmly believe that boys are in a sense more troublesome to educate than girls; still, I think there is a confusion of thought here which must be cleared up, or we shall be all along talking at cross purposes.

Wherein does the difference between the young of the two sexes mainly lie? Is it not in this, that girls have more native instinct for decorum than boys? or do you really mean that in the power of acquiring a solid and permanent goodness, one sex differs from the other? This is a very important question. Let us look at a few characteristics. Girls are less mischievous than boys, less

defiant, less noisy (many a complication in home life has arisen from noise); they are, moreover, less restive when being read aloud to on Sunday mornings, and there is less of a struggle with them when it comes to that trying duty of getting up in time for prayers. They are less inclined to be rude to their governess, and if they sometimes chase the chickens or worry the cat, it is because their brothers lead them on. In later years, also, it is comparatively easy for a mother to lift her daughter's thoughts to her own ideal of life, simply because she can keep her constantly with her, while the son is away at school. All this and much more of the same kind may be truly said, and seems to show beyond question that in respect of what is called good behaviour, the gentler sex start life with fairer opportunities and with more fortunate temperaments than their brothers. But besides this, there

is some reason to fear that in respect of goodness pure and simple, not of decorum only, boys are less well-endowed than girls. Are they not more cruel, more selfish, more liable to the dominance of bodily appetites, and above all, have they not less love for religion?

Now, without venturing to dogmatise, we may assume at least that there is much sense in these questions; and as it is well to state the matter as strongly as possible, I will say in justification of your anxiety that as far as we can see they must be answered in the affirmative: in short, boys have to face severer temptations than girls, and are less inclined to look to the right quarter for help. In addition to all this, the mother starts by understanding them less than she does her daughters. How is it possible, then, that she should address herself to the task of training

her sons with anything but grave misgivings as to her powers?

I will ask you to remember that no answer to this question that is good for much will save you trouble, but you certainly ought to be saved from the feeling of hopelessness with which some conscientious mothers set about the work, seriously marring thereby their chance of success.

Everything depends on whether your objects are worldly or the reverse. What do you want your boy to become? To say nothing of the obviously worldly parent, there are others who have aims which are in reality worldly though they may not know it. I think you will soon see that according as these aims are worldly, they war against peace of mind or hopefulness. Let us take first the not uncommon answer, "I want him to be a good boy." This may mean a great deal, but sometimes it means only "not

troublesome": especially as in some households noisiness and high spirits are treated as vices to be stamped out at any cost. It is, at any rate, worth while insisting on a fact which many schoolmasters recognise. The most richly gifted characters among men have seldom been easy to control in boyhood. A little genius goes a long way in giving trouble before it has been softened by lapse of time. Force, liveliness, independence, strength of will—do you really suppose that these are comfortable qualities in boyhood to deal with? Far from it; the possessor of them is perfectly certain to be troublesome, often more than a match for his teacher.

Providentially the task of crushing out originality is apparently beyond mortal strength, otherwise it would have been done over and over again by choleric ushers, or by mothers with nervous temperament. Grapple with the child while you can, regulate his outbursts, and curb

his passions; but in spite of your headaches, offer up a thanksgiving daily for his vitality. The future of England depends on boys like him; and already we have too many sheep about the place. Do not add one more, I beseech you, though, as I have already said, it is very doubtful if you can.

"Oh but, of course, I don't mean that sort of thing at all," exclaims another; "I mean a really good man. I could stand his being troublesome in boyhood if he will only turn out something worth talking about afterwards; I want him to be respected and useful to his country, and a power for good wherever he goes. Surely one may wish that." Certainly no one can prevent you wishing it if you like, but I am only telling you hard facts. You have a worldly object in view, though disguised under fine names; and however natural it be to have such an object, you must pay for

it, and the price is your peace of mind. The truth is, you wish your son to be a distinguished man, and is it likely, think you, that your wishes will ever be fulfilled? Suppose he becomes distinguished, is it likely you will think him distinguished enough? or that you will live to see him reach the goal of your ambition? You complain that it is hard to bring up boys, but if you have set your affections on distinction, whether of goodness or of cleverness, you are probably undertaking a task which is not merely difficult but impossible, and before you lies a whole series of disappointments. Very likely the ideal may be slowly destroyed, but would it not be well to refrain from putting it up at all?

There can be little doubt that what you crave is not simply that your son should be good, but that men should recognise his goodness—a totally different

ideal, and one which is not free from self-seeking.

"I think I understand you," says a third, "but my misgivings simply concern the difficulty of training his character. I don't desire recognition, but I do desire that he shall reach a fair standard of goodness. I am content to recognise that he is not gifted above others with intellect or force of character, and so I have abandoned the hope of distinction for him. My fear is that by blundering I may spoil his chances of growing in virtue; he has already given indications of a good deal of angry temper and disobedience though he is very young, and when I think of what these may grow into, ten years hence, my heart sinks within me. And when people tell me that everything depends on the mother, how can I help being weighed down with care?"

Certain it is that anxiety of this kind

deserves the most respectful consideration. It is based not on a foolish fussiness, nor on a lethargic desire for a quiet life, nor on earthly aspirations disguised under lofty names, but on a sincere desire to do what is right, coupled with a very reasonable self-distrust. Still it remains true that unworldliness is the only temper which gives the serenity necessary to a successful training.

You speak of indications of bad temper and the like as already visible. But if these bad qualities are born in the child, and not the result of bad training, there is no reason for you to be seriously disquieted. They are implanted in that boy and have descended to him no one knows whence, but they are not your fault. And this is true even if the bad qualities be very bad indeed—evasiveness or uncleanness, or, far worse than either, a natural hatred of what is good.

They may startle and appal you from

time to time, but they need not make you despair. The fact remains—they are not your fault. And even though you begin to feel convinced that with these faults of character he will never make a good man, is it not rash to be certain beforehand on such a point? It is doubtless being borne in upon you that your own influence is too weak to fulfil your desire; but the boy will be exposed to other influences before he is grown up, and one of these has been likened to the wind that bloweth where it listeth. I would not, if I were you, venture on a prophecy in such a matter. And even if the years go by and your misgivings are being verified, and he is not growing up a good man, here again I must repeat what has been said: unworldliness of aim is your only hope, the underlying principle of it being the truth which Newman, I think, thus expressed—"We shall be judged some day, not by what God has done for us, but by what

we have done for ourselves." Now I trust you will not merely tolerate this politely, as a proper and pious utterance, but resolutely think if it is true, and then apply it to the matter in hand. We are on a very dim borderland when we talk of the beginnings of man's responsibility for his disposition, or the comparative influence of what psychologists have called nature and nurture. But granting the tolerably plain assumption that some individuals—your boy, if you like, among the number—are endowed at birth with strong tendencies to evil, a belief in God's justice is impossible unless we accept Newman's canon. It comes to this: that ultimately the one important question for each man is, not whether he has attained a certain standard of goodness, but whether he has progressed, or at least honestly tried to progress, to some standard above the starting-point.

I am well aware that in saying this I

am riding rather roughshod over a number of great and momentous distinctions in theology and philosophy, but you will not accuse me of aiming at scientific exactness on such a subject. The above canon is a maxim of very great value in religious training. Indeed I hardly know of any likely to be more useful to mothers, who quail before the difficulty of bringing up a troublesome boy, unless it be the cognate aphorism of another great modern teacher, "There is no quite fatal sin except the ceasing to try." We all recognise this in making a comparison between a heathen and a Christian, or between a dweller in the slums and a thoroughly well-brought-up young man. Can we not also apply it to boys of gentle birth, but of most ungentle hereditary qualities? They begin badly, but if their lives are full of honest endeavour there is no reason to despair, even though the starting-point was very low. The boy we are thinking

of is very young; it will be several years yet before his heritage of qualities can be measured. During all that time he is only starting in his career of self-conquest. And yet you are inclined to be in despair almost before the start, whereas you ought to be looking humbly and hopefully to the life beyond the grave.

It would be easy to inveigh against such counsels as being well enough in the pulpit, but useless for the everyday life of plain men and women.

It is worth remarking, however, that no one has a right to call this advice unpractical till he has tested it and found it fail. Now let us look more closely at the precise problem set before you, and ask what is required for success in dealing with it. You tell me that your boy is already showing signs of evil in him. We agree, I trust, in saying that the one thing for which he exists is to overcome that evil, and

that the chief object of your life is to help him in doing so. Further, that whatever be the truth about the development of the religious instinct in boyhood, we cannot be wrong in labouring to foster in him the principles of simple rectitude, to get him to love good and hate evil. The result may be little or nothing that is visible, but no stone is to be left unturned to secure that the lad's life-history shall be a steadfast endeavour towards virtue, no matter from how low a level he may be starting; and evidences of his progress we leave in other hands.

Broadly speaking, then, what is the mother's part in this undertaking? First, to be quite certain that her influence on her son depends on what she is, and only in a very subordinate way on what she does. You are embarking on a task which requires unworldliness. You must be unworldly, not only in education but in everything. Little by little that boy

is drinking in from your lips and gestures and expressions, either that you are living in view of an Unseen Presence and for a life beyond the grave, or that though you talk about such things sometimes, your keenest interests, your deepest emotions, are stirred by things altogether on this side of the grave, strangely ephemeral, strikingly mundane, in comparison with your professions.

For a time you are to him as a Deity. What you long for he may learn to long for; and that ought to be simply the good that seems to be not natural to him, instead of the evil that apparently is. So if you set your whole affection on this goodness, you will have done almost all your part.

And indeed it will be a great deal. Think of the kind of struggle that lies before that child during the stormy years ahead of him. Under what conditions will it be fought? and on what does

the issue of each trial depend? It would not be difficult perhaps to discern causes which on each separate occasion will have effected the result. But in reality, when your boy is in presence of a temptation, with good on one side, evil on the other, everything depends, humanly speaking, on the idea he has of the importance of a right choice. Now, how can that idea be more solidly and surely planted than by taking care that his earliest impressions of a human being are of one who habitually measures human affairs with reference to the after life, and who serenely lives on the strength drawn from an unseen source? He will thereafter carry with him a conviction, which no criticism can possibly shatter, that evil is to be abhorred and good is to be earnestly desired, each for its own sake; and as time goes on he will come to understand that his mother's

character is the living witness to him of certain truths, of which he has often heard, of man being created in God's image, and being enabled in the power of His Spirit to grow more and more into His likeness.

Other influences will be at work, and no one can forecast the end. Some boys seem proof against any religious influence. So for a long time did S. Augustine; but he was the son of one who has set an example to mothers for all time. A few boys become saints and heroes no one knows how. But you must not concern yourself with cases out of the common. The path that you have to walk in is plainly that of self-sanctification for the sake of your child.

APPENDIX I

SOME SMALL PRACTICAL POINTS

Dress.—Certain follies in boys' clothing might be easily remedied if they were more widely known.

(*a*) At the time of most rapid growth, fifteen or thereabouts, the danger of tight collars should be noticed. Wrong-headed but thrifty parents think to save their purses by allowing their boys to wear outgrown collars for some time after they have begun to cause discomfort. Result, all kinds of disorders to the blood-vessels of the head and neck, which any doctor can tell you of; damage to the eyes and ruin to the singing-voice, which is just settling itself into its manhood's register.

(*b*) It may be doubted whether the ordinary

school-fashion of dress is thoroughly healthy, but as I am not criticising schools, let us see what may be and is not done at home. The round jacket, a very dainty boy-garment, gets carried up at the period of growth at the same time that the trousers are gently lowered to eke out their inadequate length, and to make a decent show round the ankles. Result—an interregnum between the top of the trousers and the bottom of the jacket, seen to full advantage from behind, when the boy sits at a desk writing with squared elbows. Enter the east wind making havoc of the liver and kidneys. This is bad economy.

(*c*) Boys often wear incredibly bad boots, and seem to enjoy having a hole in each sole. I mention this because the difficulty is not to be easily met by the school authorities. Miserable cheap boots only mean a long doctor's bill, and it is no use supposing they can mean anything else.

(*d*) The question of woollen clothing *versus* linen and the like, which a great benefactor of the human race has brought before the people

of Western Europe, should be carefully thought out. I ask no more. Truth is great and will prevail, but it may be for a long time ignored. Young boys are given to throwing off their clothing in their sleep. This is entirely due to the oppressiveness caused by the nightshirt and linen sheets. Moreover, if left to themselves there is no amount of rugs and stuffy coats that they will not pile on their beds if they think it is cold. Surely woollen pyjamas are the healthiest garments to wear at night.

(*e*) Again, it is difficult to imagine what follies growing boys will be guilty of in respect to tight waistcoats and trouser-tops. Who is to see to these things if mothers do not?

(*f*) A preparatory-school master tells me that it is not uncommon for little boys earnestly desirous of mastering some paragraphs of printed matter, to hold the books so near to their eyes as to cause headaches and injury to the sight. Probably this trouble exists more at school than at home.

APPENDIX II

THE Betting and Loans (Infants) Act (1892) makes it a criminal offence for the purpose of earning interest, commission, reward, or other profit, to send or cause to be sent to a person known by the sender to be an infant, any circular, notice, advertisement, letter, telegram, or other document which invites, or may reasonably be implied to invite, the recipient to borrow money or to enter into any transaction involving the borrowing of money, or to apply to any person, or at any place, with a view to obtaining information or advice as to borrowing money.

For this he is liable, if convicted on indictment (*i.e.* at Assizes or Quarter Sessions), to three months' hard labour or £100 fine, or both; or if convicted summarily (*i.e.* at Petty Sessions or before a police magistrate) to a

month's hard labour or £20 fine, or both. Any one can prosecute.

It is necessary to prove that the sender of the circular, etc., knew that the person to whom it was sent was under age; but by § 3 of the Act, if it is sent to any one at any university, college, school, or other place of education, the sender is to be deemed to have known that the "sendee" was an infant, unless he proves that he had reasonable grounds for believing the contrary.

By § 2 (2), if the document purports to issue from any address named therein, or indicates any address as the place to which application is to be made with reference to the subject-matter of the document, and at that place there is carried on any business connected with loans, every person taking part in such business or attending at the place, is deemed to have sent the document, unless he shows that he knew nothing about it.

THE END

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